

# **UCL Graduate School Survey for Graduate Taught Degree Students August 2011**

## **Data Presentation and Report**

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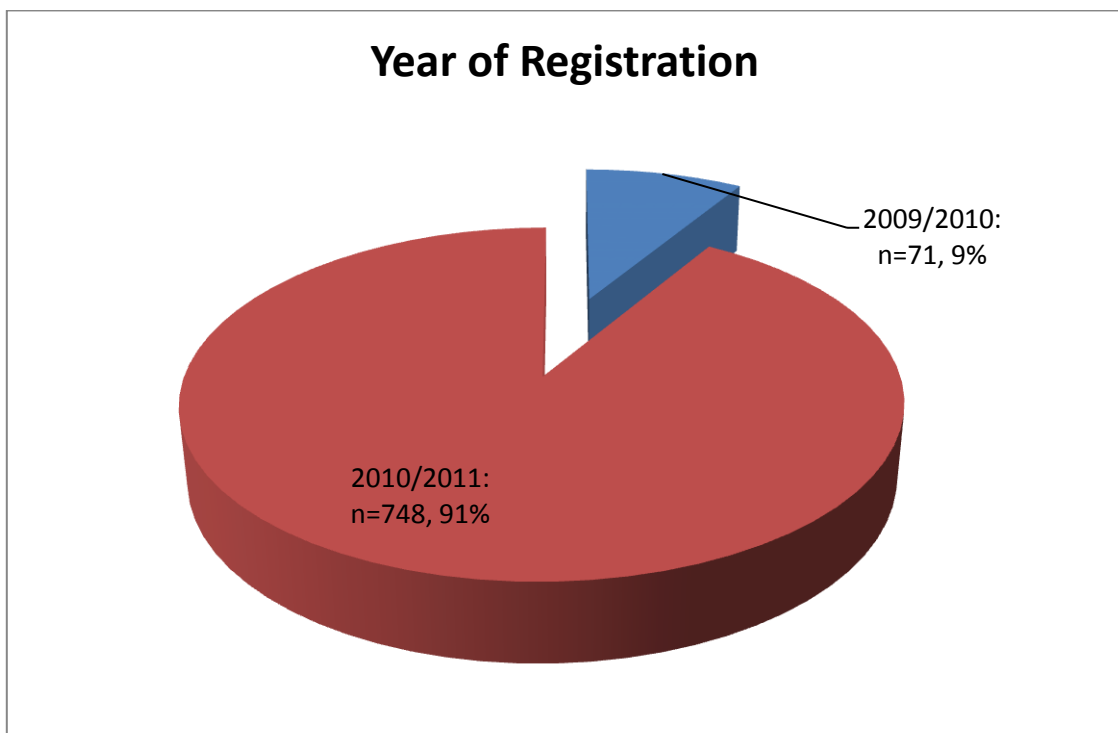
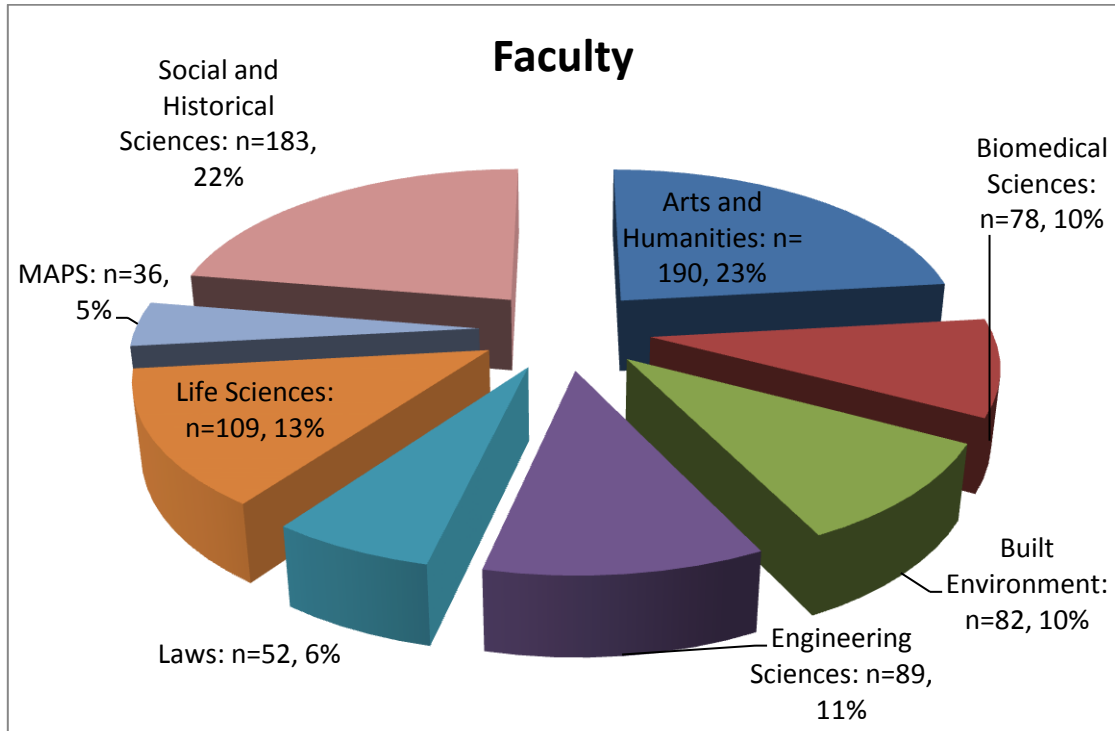
## **Introduction**

In August, 2011 a survey was sent by the Graduate School to all taught graduate degree students at UCL. A total number of 819 students responded out of a possible 6624, representing 12.4% of the taught graduate student cohort when the survey was commissioned. The survey sampled the student body in order to assess levels of satisfaction regarding a number of aspects of the taught postgraduate degree experience at UCL.

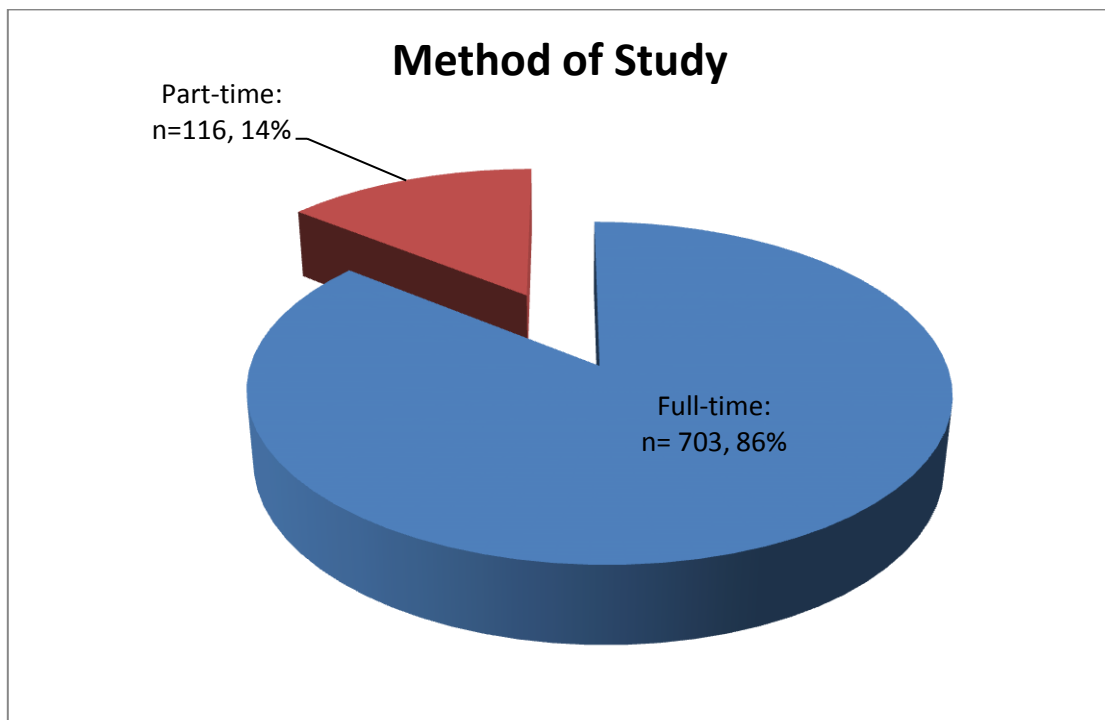
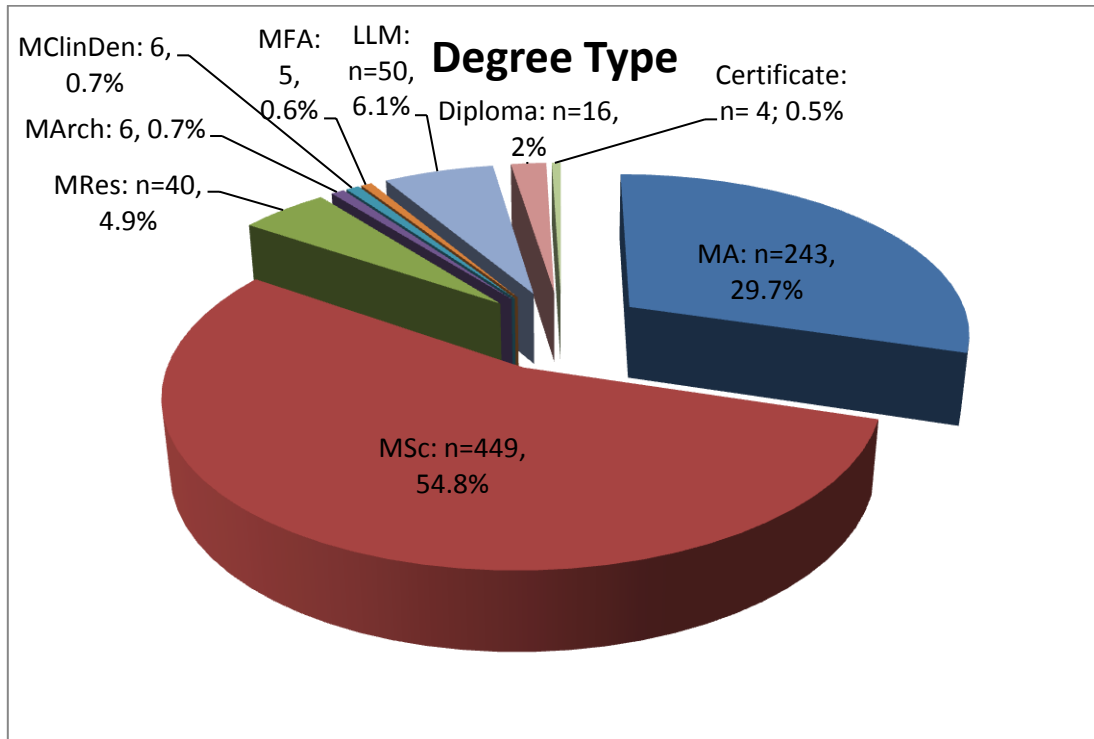
Summaries of the responses to each question are presented below and selected additional comments are also included. This report draws some conclusions where trends have been identified. The total number of respondents is 819, unless otherwise noted in individual charts and tables.

## A: Information about your degree

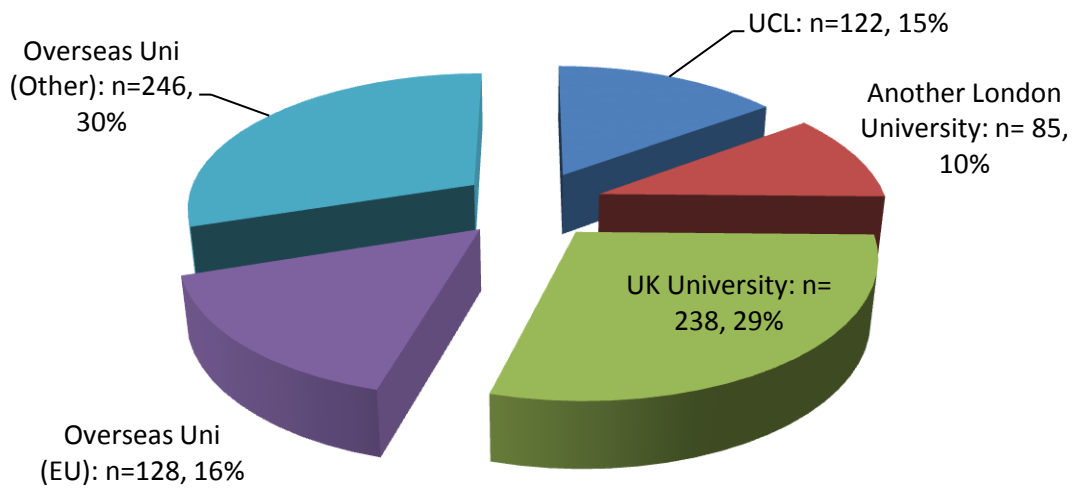
Students from every Faculty responded to the survey. The majority (91%) started in 2010/2011.



Most respondents (84.5%) were enrolled on either an MSc or MA programme and were full time students (86%). 46% of respondents had completed their undergraduate degrees abroad.

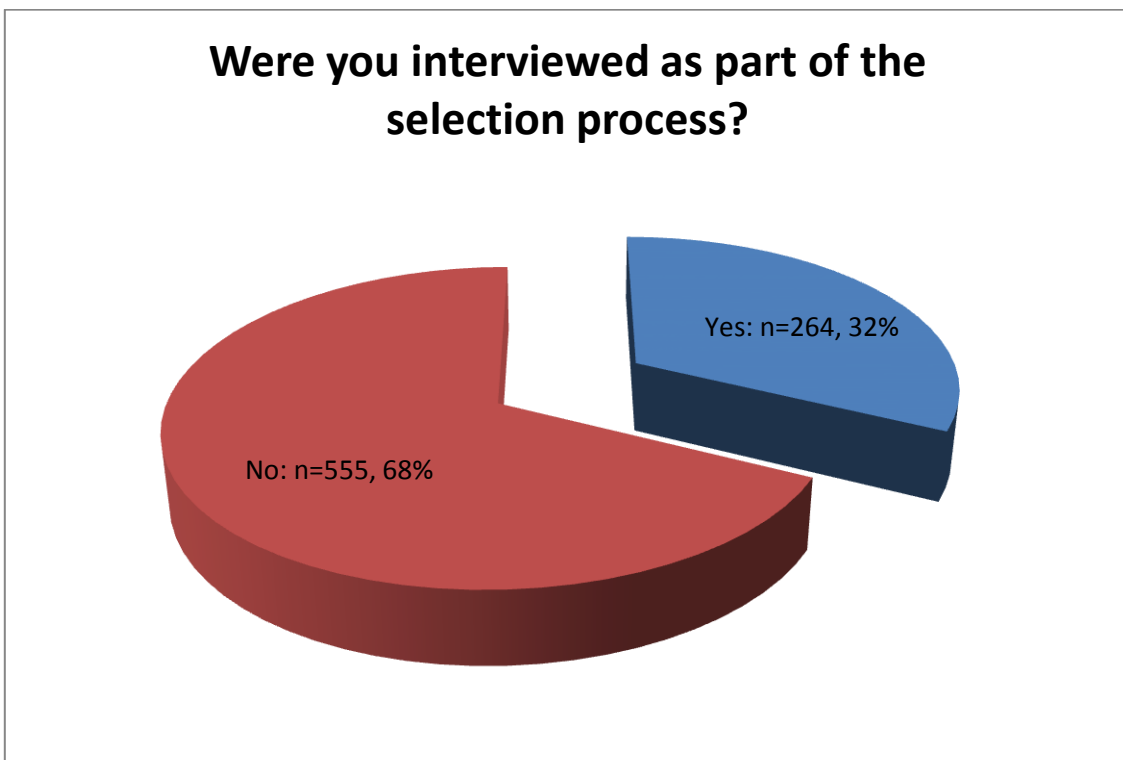
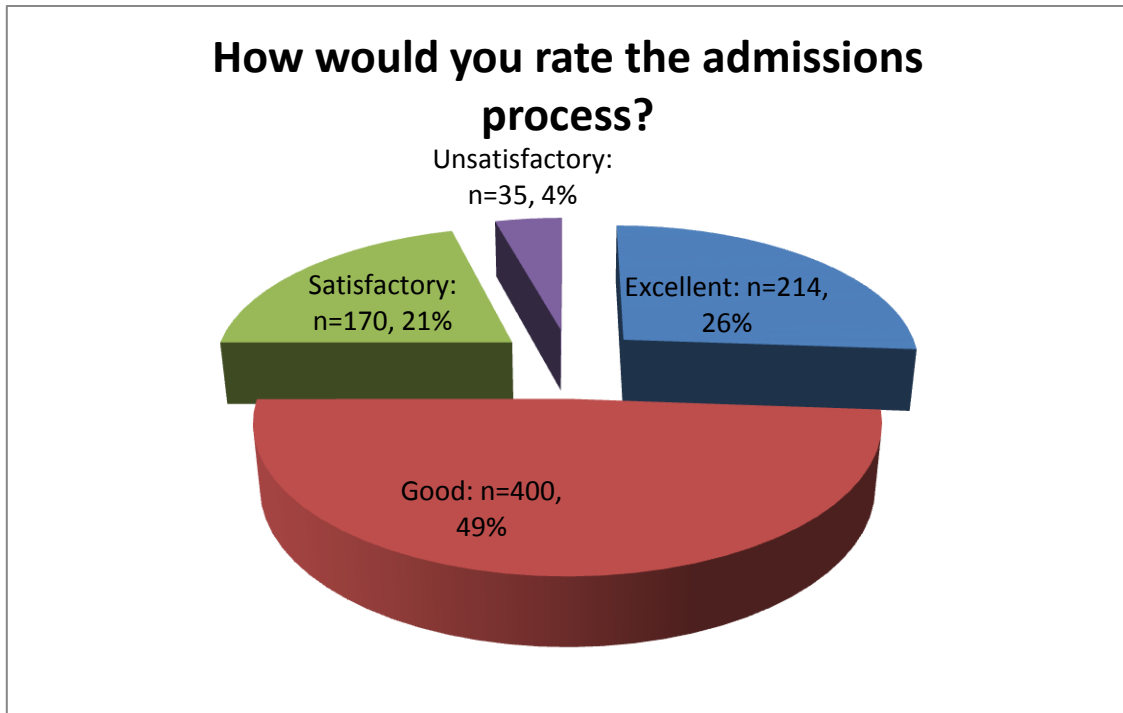


## Where did you complete your undergraduate degree?

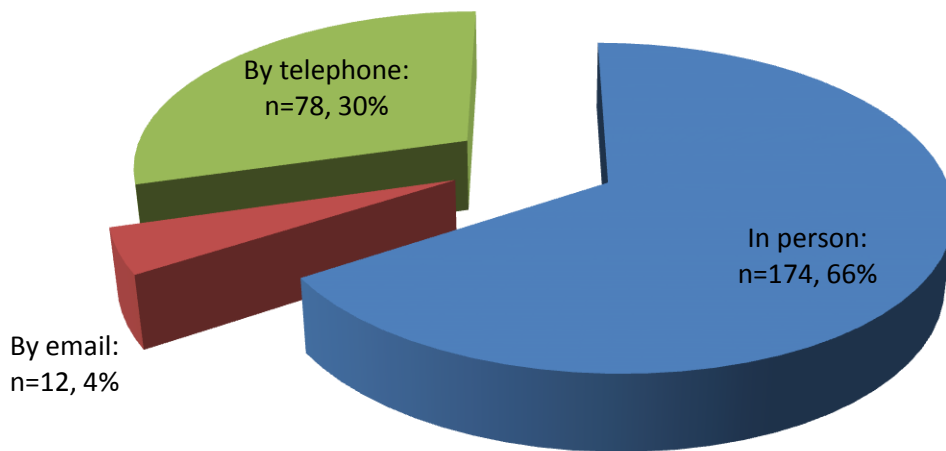


## B: Admission and Selection

The vast majority (96%) of respondents rated the admissions process 'Satisfactory' or higher. Of the 32% who were interviewed, the majority (66%) were interviewed in person.



### If yes, how were you interviewed? (n=264)

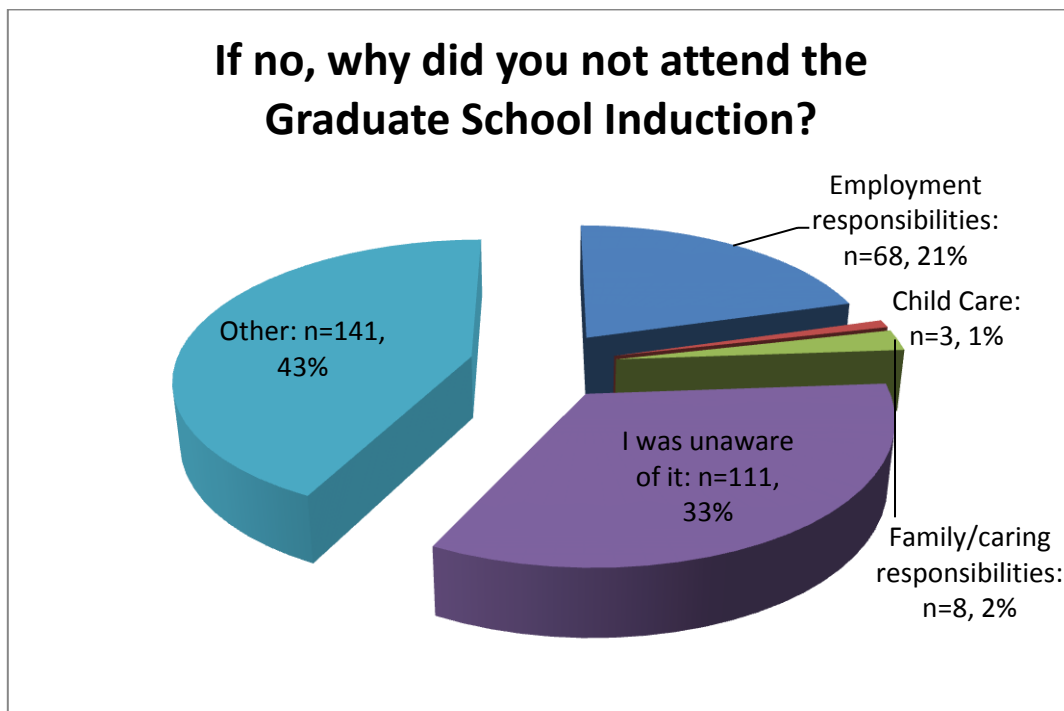
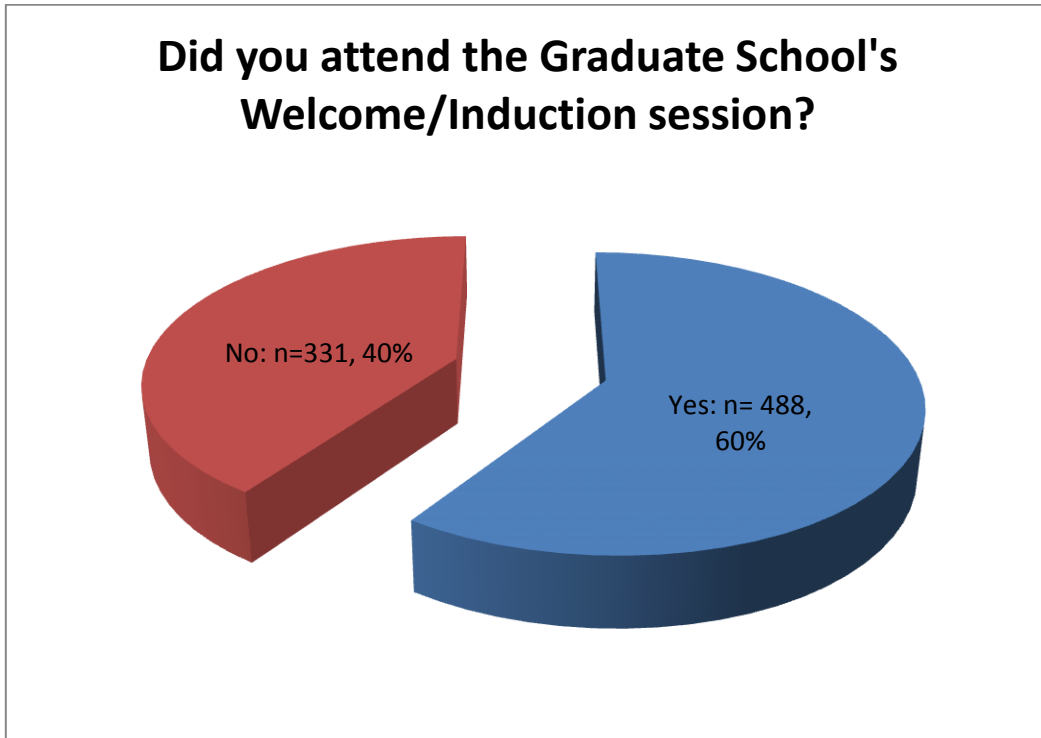


A few respondents commented that UCL admissions were not prompt enough in replying to enquiries and that they would prefer to receive course information in a more timely manner.

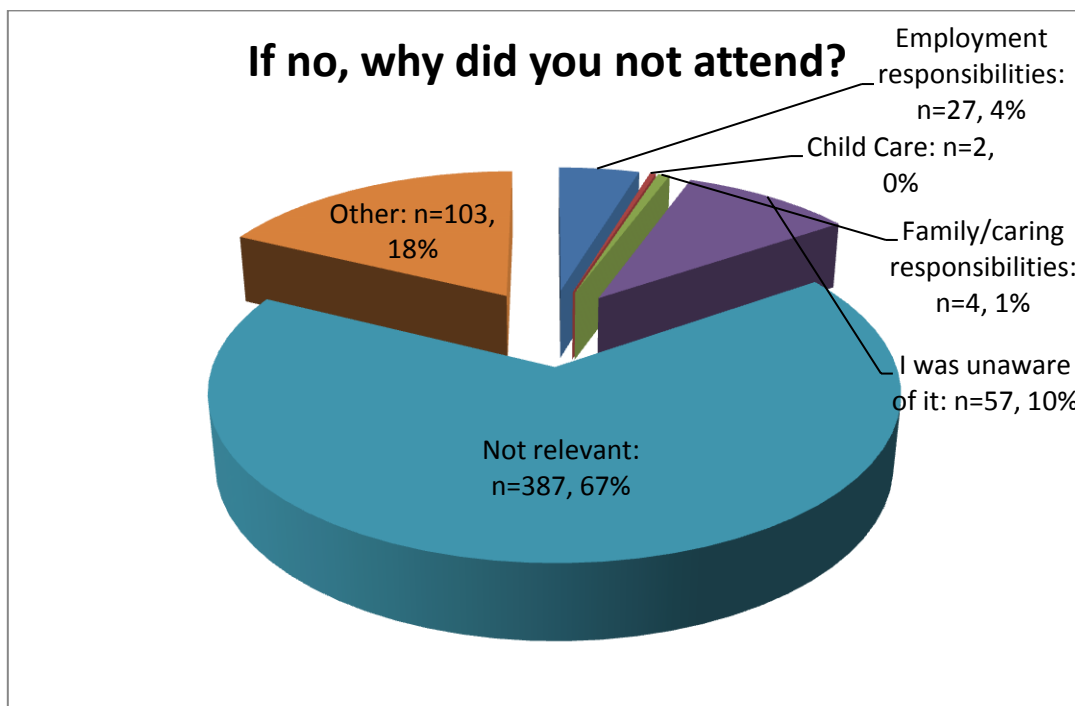
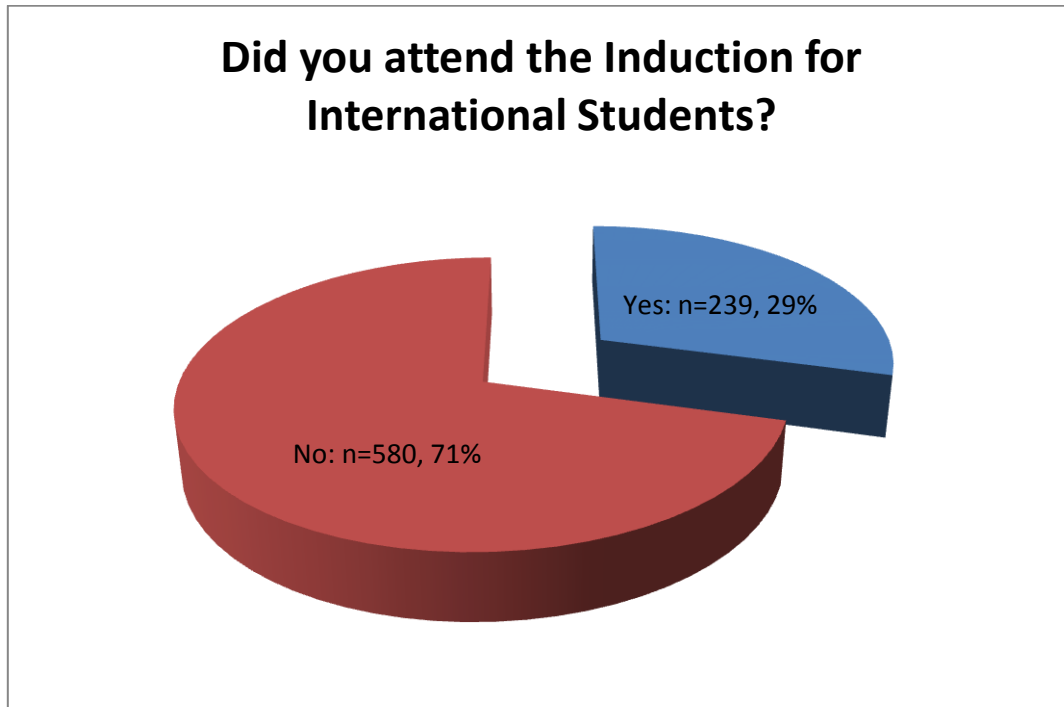


### C: Induction

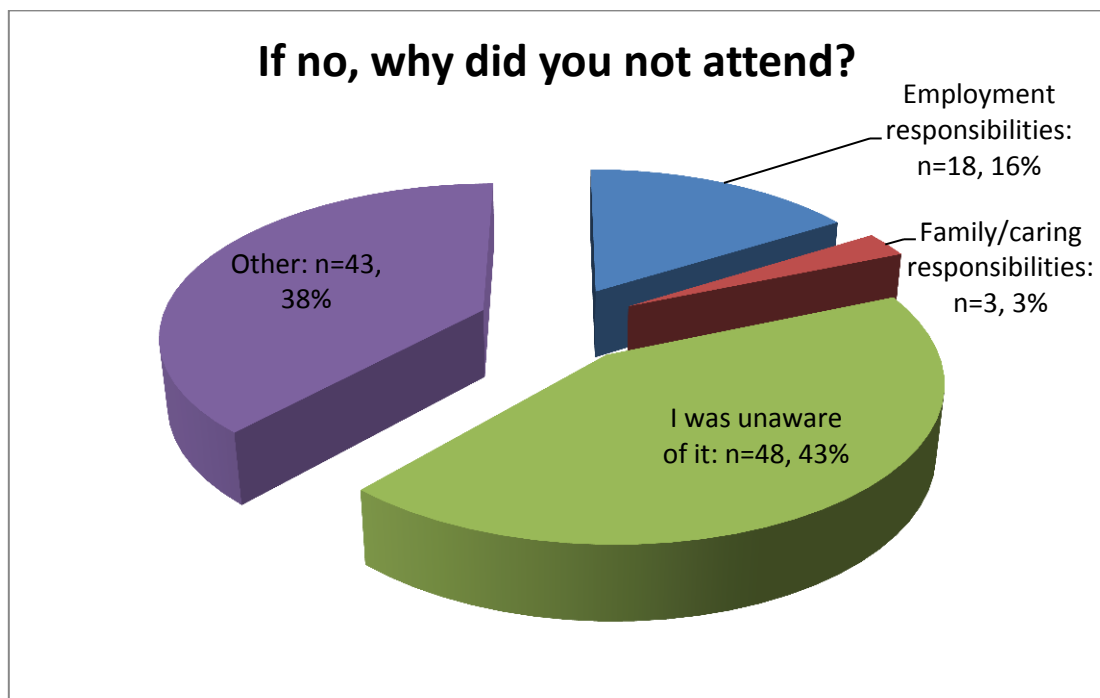
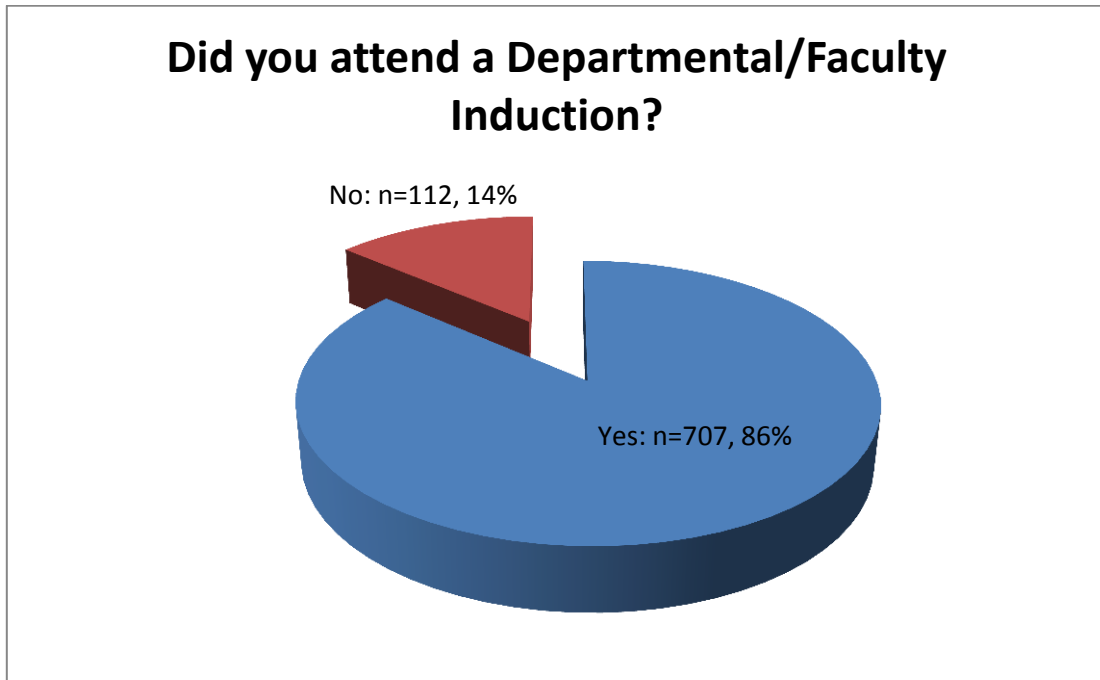
Over half of students (60%) attended the Graduate School's Induction Session. Of those who didn't attend, (33%) stated that this was because they were unaware of it.



Most students (71%) did not attend the Induction for international students. However, of those that didn't attend, the vast majority were UK students as they answered 'Not relevant' (67%).



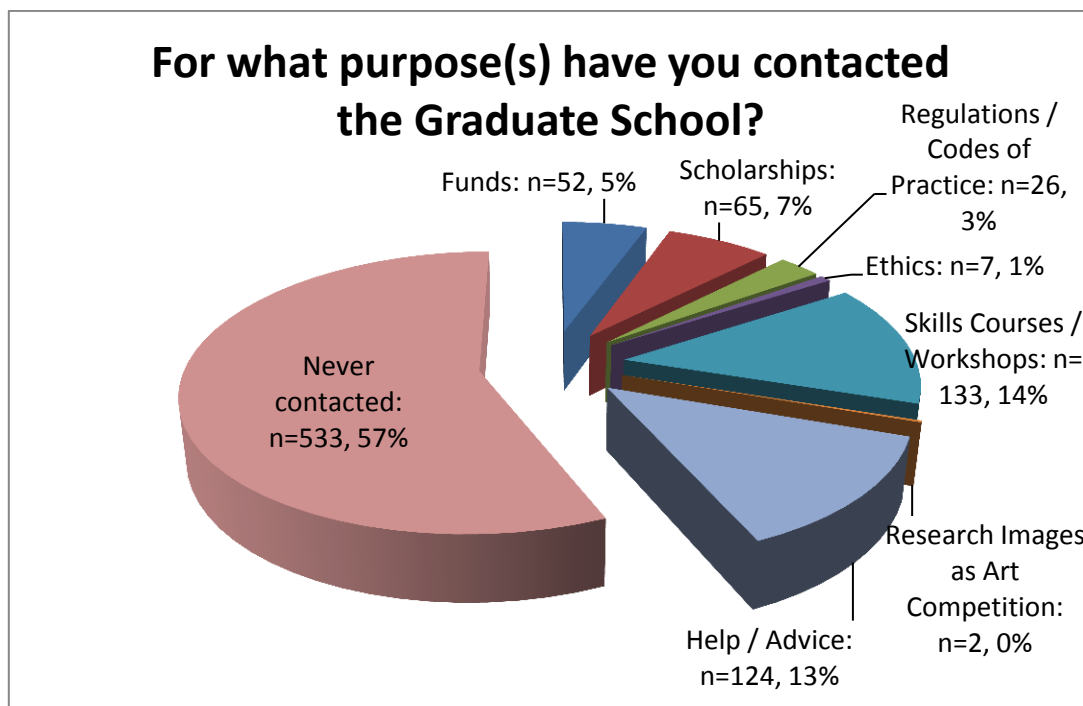
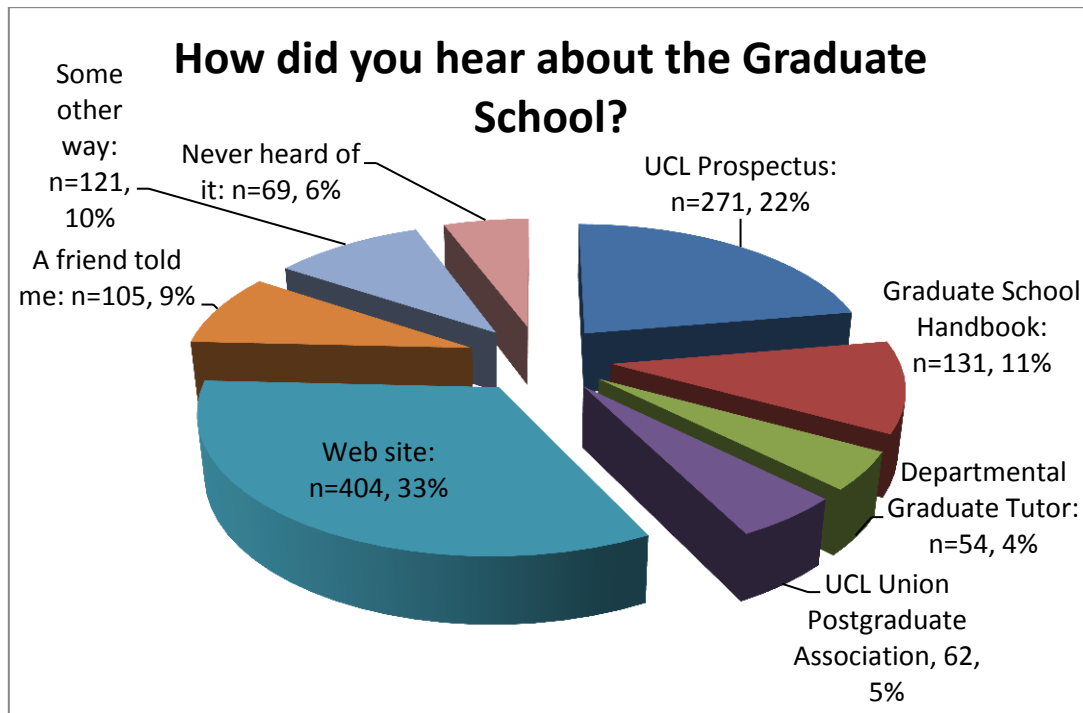
Almost all students (86%) attended a Departmental/Faculty Induction. The most commonly cited reason for non attendance was that respondents were unaware of it (43%).



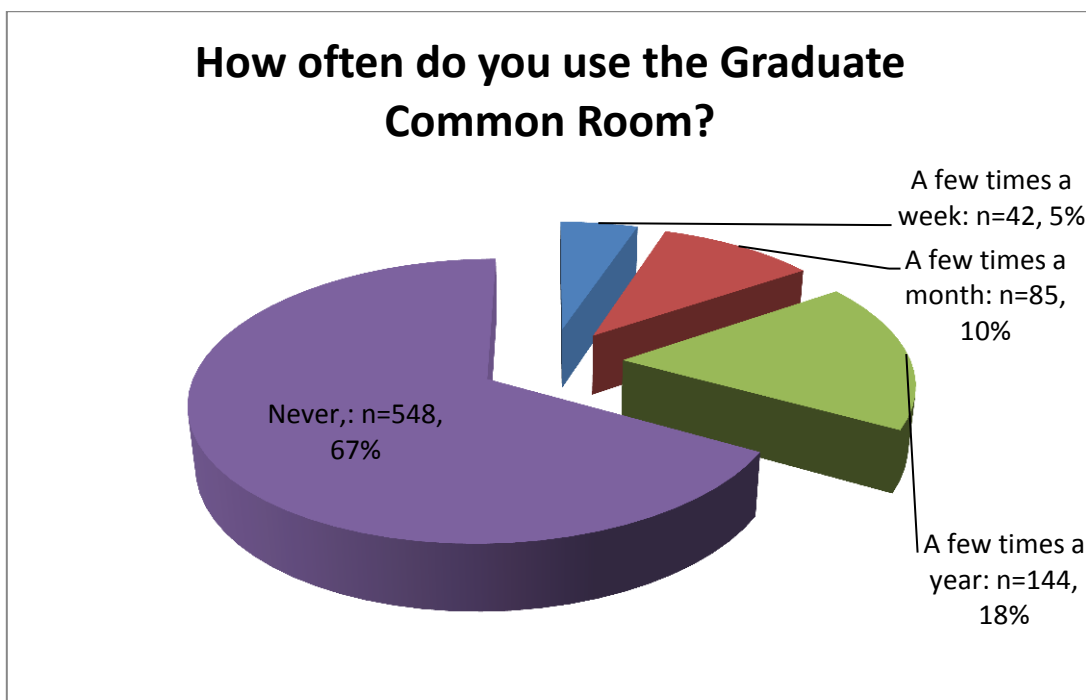
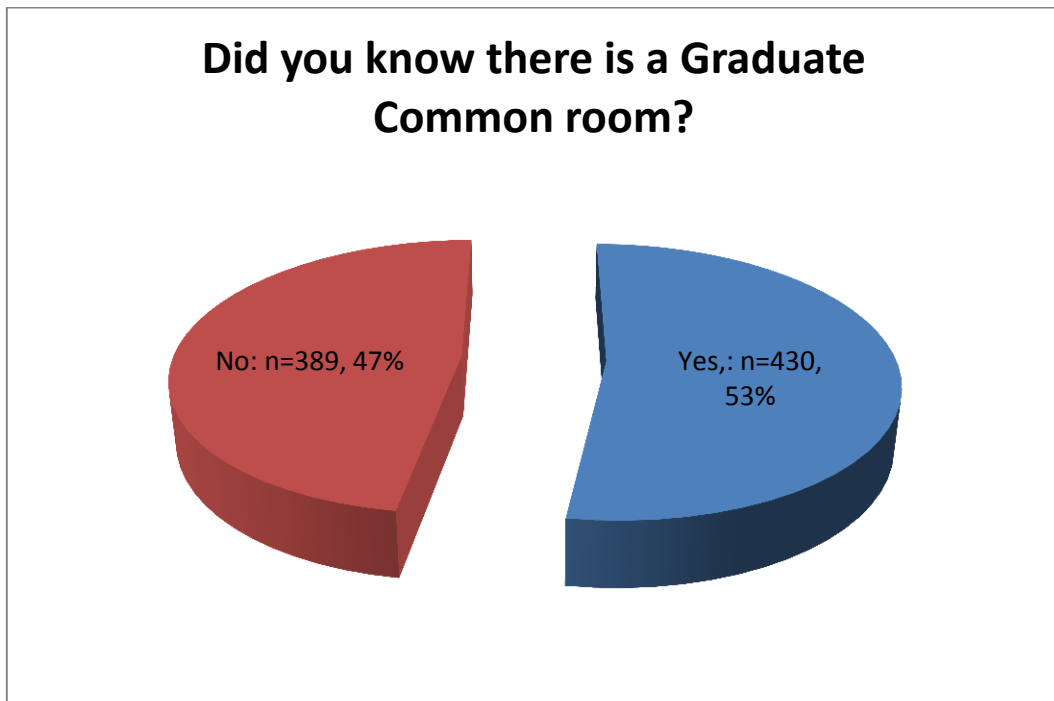
Student comments included that as Master's students are only at UCL for one year, they would prefer more detailed information about UCL facilities and services at the beginning of their course. However, one student thought that too much information was provided in the first week.

## D: Graduate School

The most common medium for hearing about the Graduate School was its website (33%) followed by the UCL Prospectus (22%). Most respondents (57%) had never contacted the Graduate School but of those that did, the most common purposes were the skills courses and workshops (14%) and help and advice (13%).



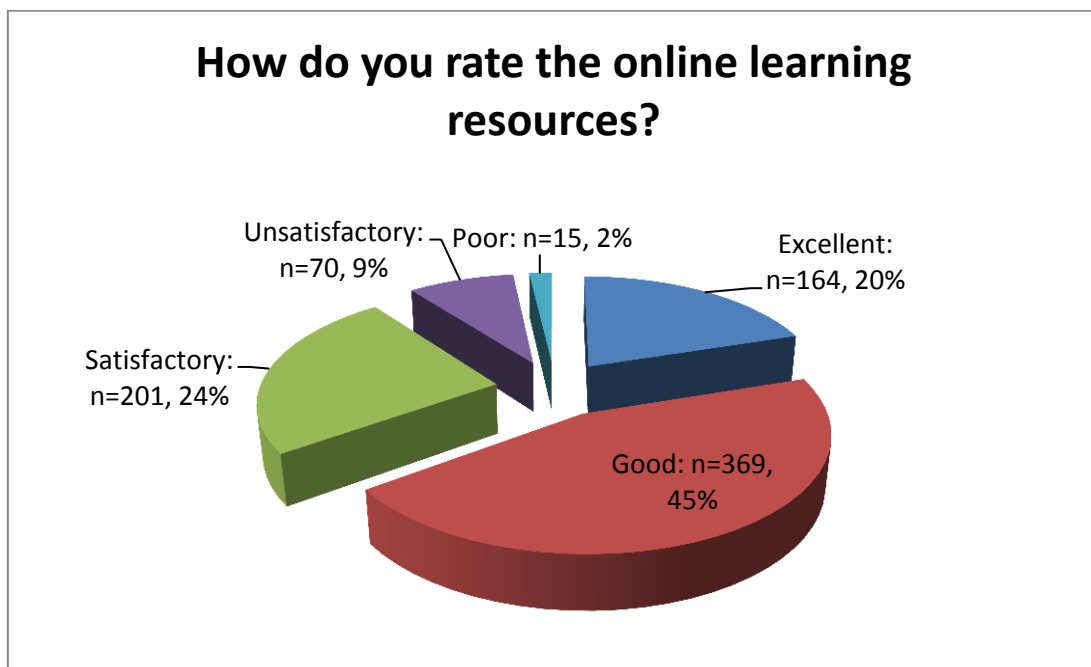
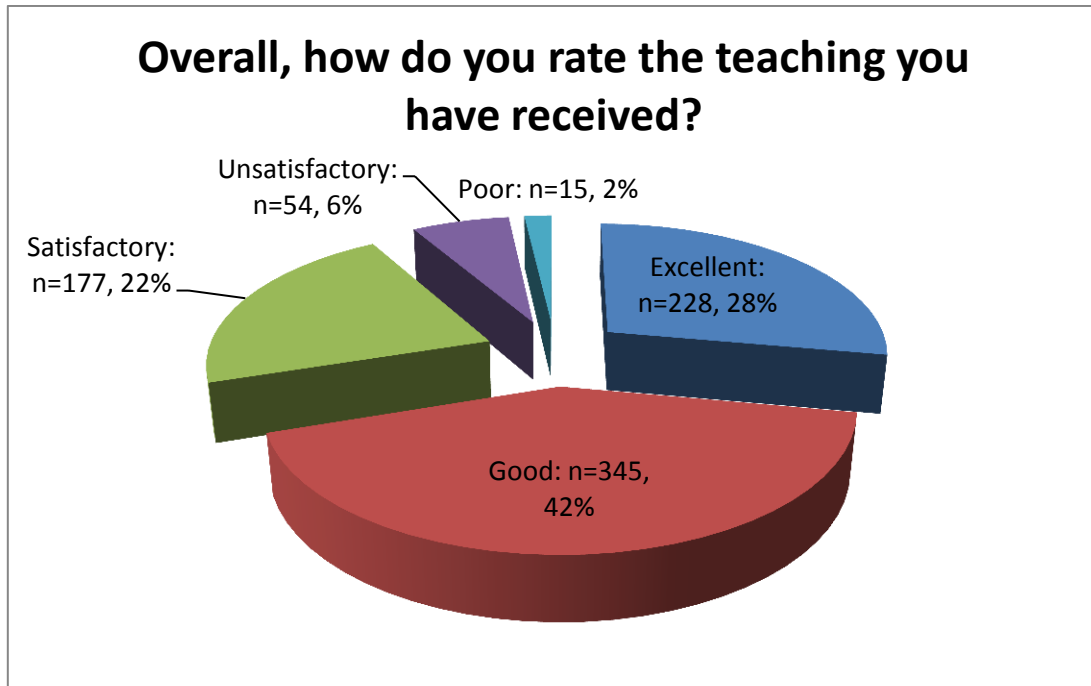
Just over half of respondents (53%) know that there is a Graduate Common Room although the majority (85%) don't use it more than a few times a year, if at all.



One student would have preferred to have received further information about specific services for graduate students during their course as there were many services that they were not aware of.

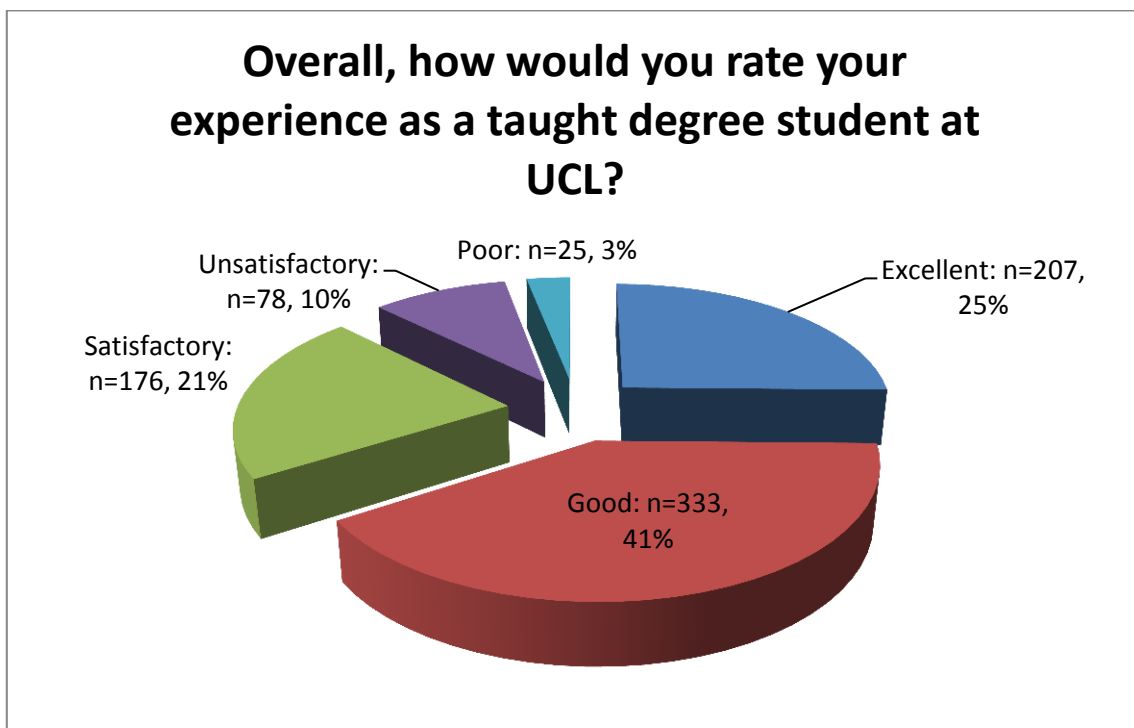
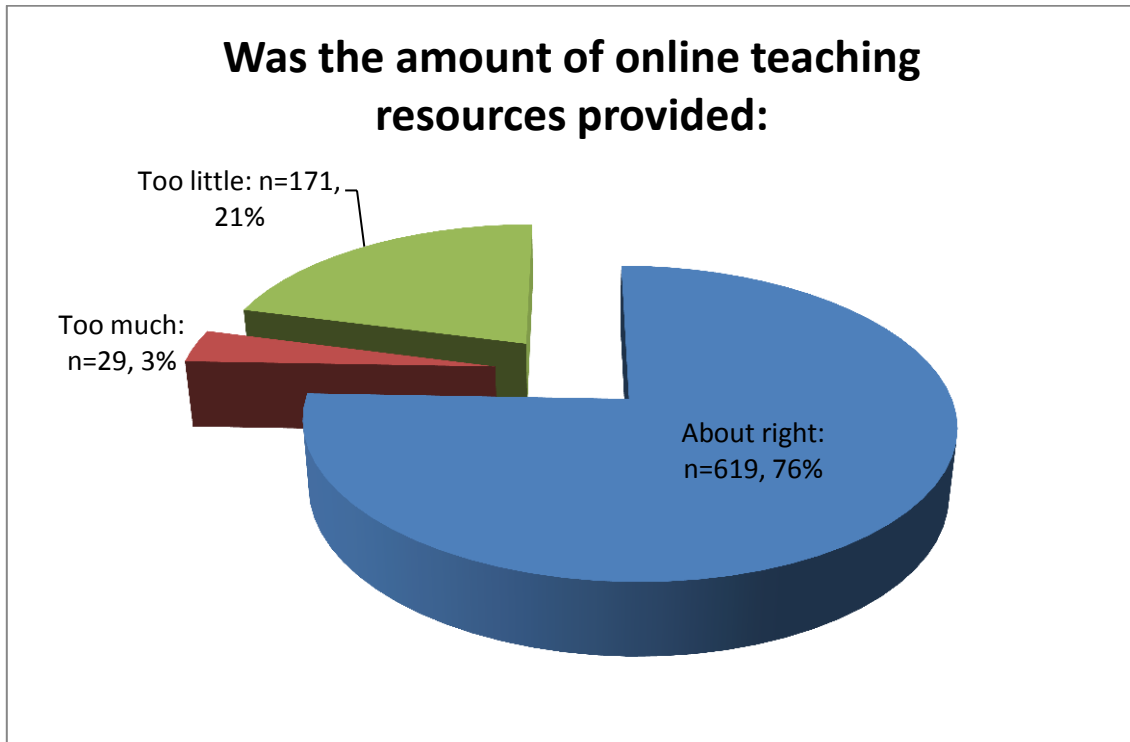
## E: Teaching

The vast majority of students (92%) described the teaching at UCL as 'Satisfactory' or better. A similarly high proportion (89%) of respondents rated the online resources for their taught degree programme as 'Satisfactory' or higher.





76% of respondents felt the amount of online teaching resources provided was about right. The majority of respondents (87%) rated their overall experience as a taught graduate student at UCL as 'Satisfactory' or better.

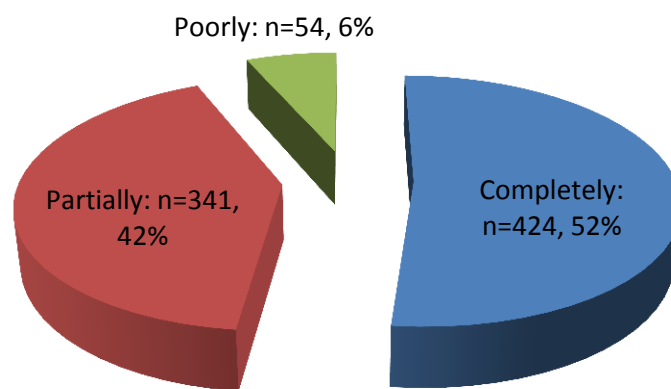


A large number of additional comments concerned teaching. Comments included high praise for the teaching staff, although students in one or two departments found the standard of course material too easy, and in other cases found courses to be slightly disorganised. Some students who lived outside London said they would prefer more teaching resources to be available online. Some students would have preferred more teaching as part of their course and more timely feedback as to the standard of their written work/assessments, and others found the standard of teaching and their learning experience to be excellent, with one student saying that "UCL should be rated the highest of all the London universities. It is superb at every level". One student found the teaching good, but the availability of suitable classrooms to be lacking.

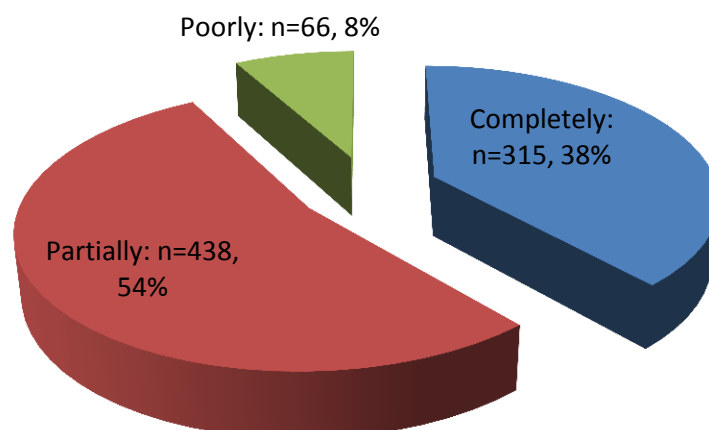
## F: Library

Just over half of respondents (52%) felt that UCL Library Services completely met their needs with regards to recommended readings for coursework, however only 38% of respondents felt that UCL Library Services completely met their needs for materials required for research and background information.

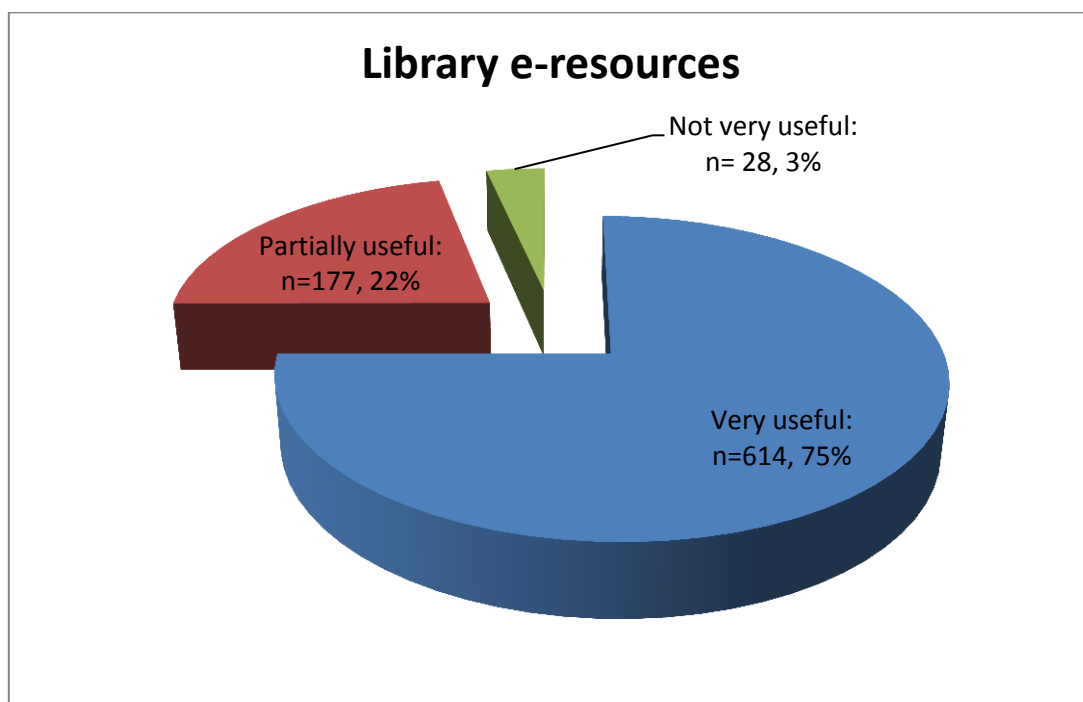
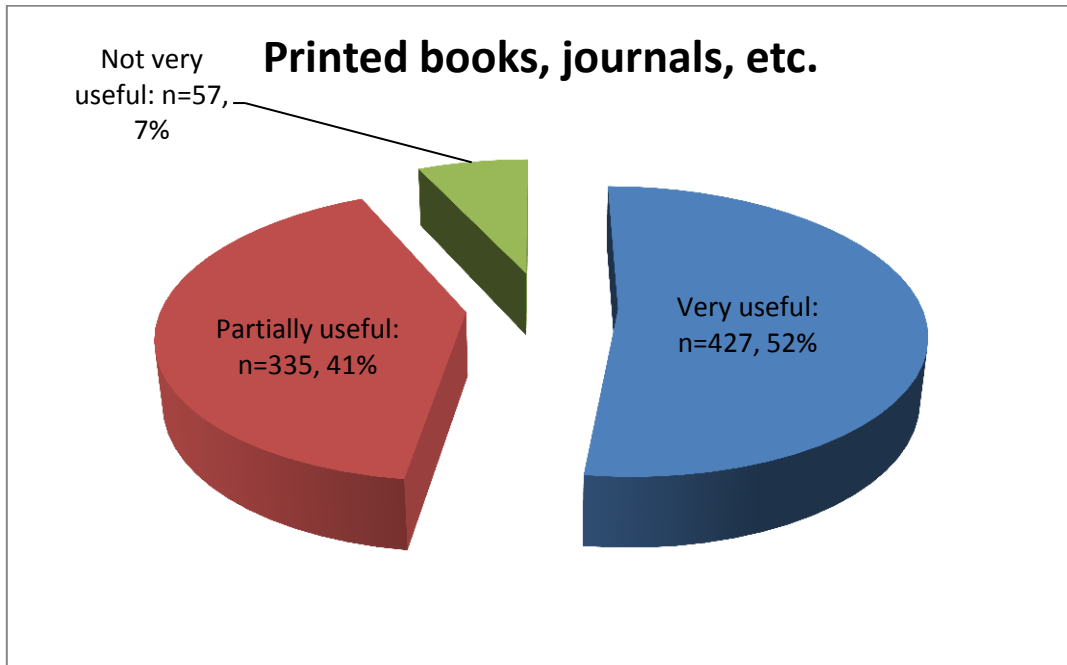
### How completely does UCL Library Services meet your need for recommended coursework readings?



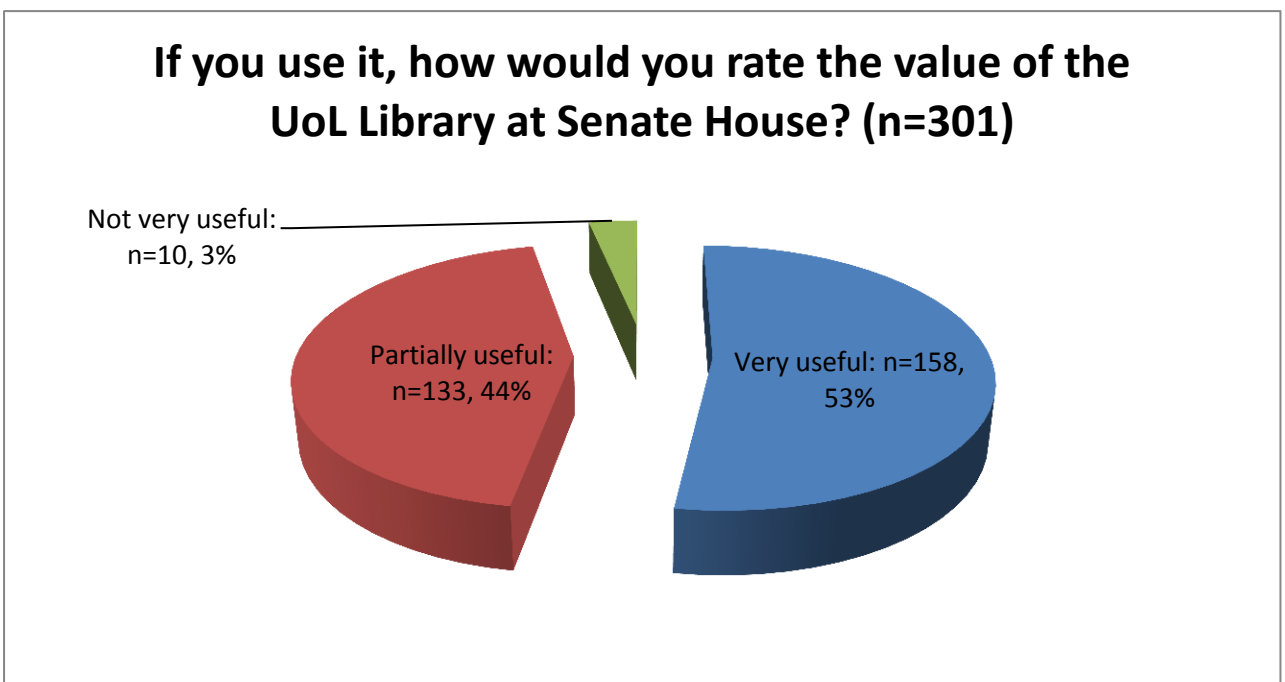
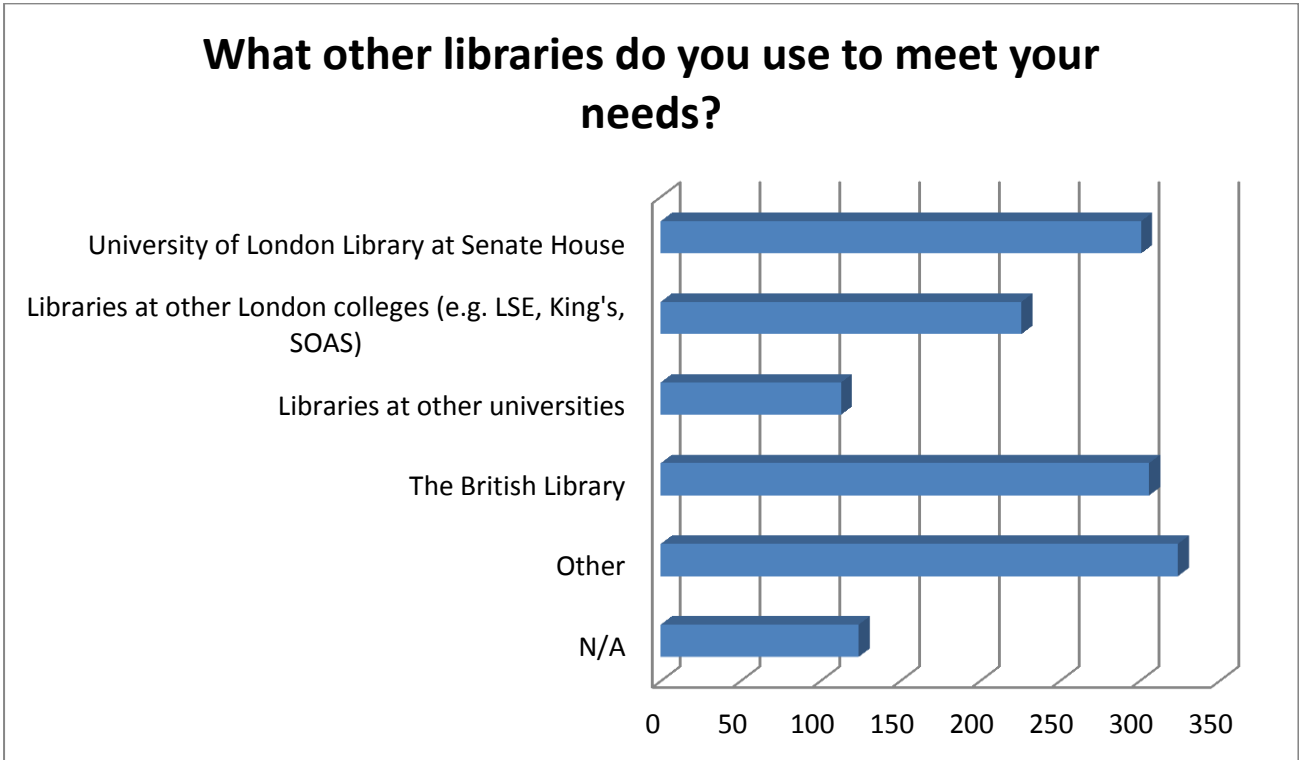
### How completely does UCL Library Services meet your need for materials required for your research or background reading?



52% of respondents found the UCL Library Services book and journal collections 'Very useful', and 75% of respondents described electronic resources at UCL as 'Very useful'.

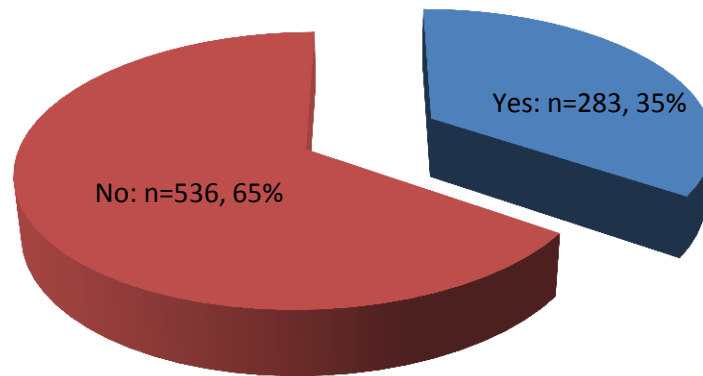


The most commonly used libraries outside UCL include the University of London Library at Senate House (301 of 819 respondents) and the British Library (306 of 819 respondents). Libraries at other universities (such as LSE, King’s and SOAS) are also used by a substantial number of respondents (226 of 819). Of the 301 respondents who used the UoL Library at Senate House, 53% rated the use of this library as 'Very useful'.

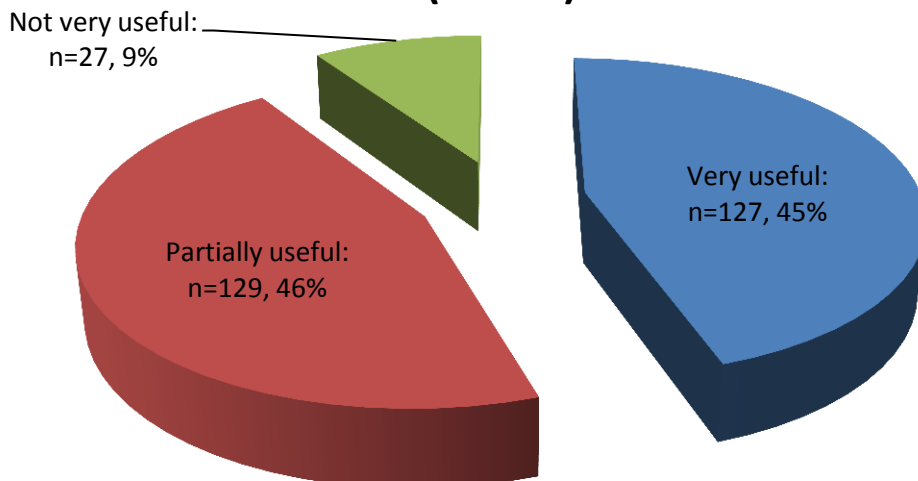


35% of respondents attended one of the training sessions offered by UCL Library Services and, of the 283 respondents who attended, 91% found the training 'Very useful' or 'Partially useful'.

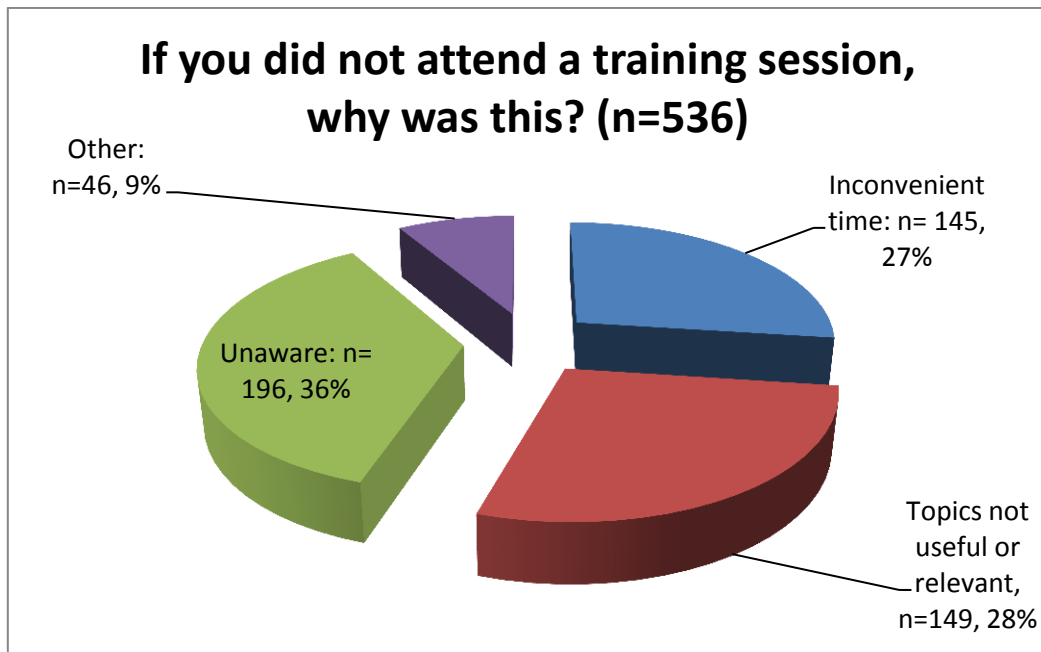
### Have you attended one of the training sessions offered by UCL Library Services?



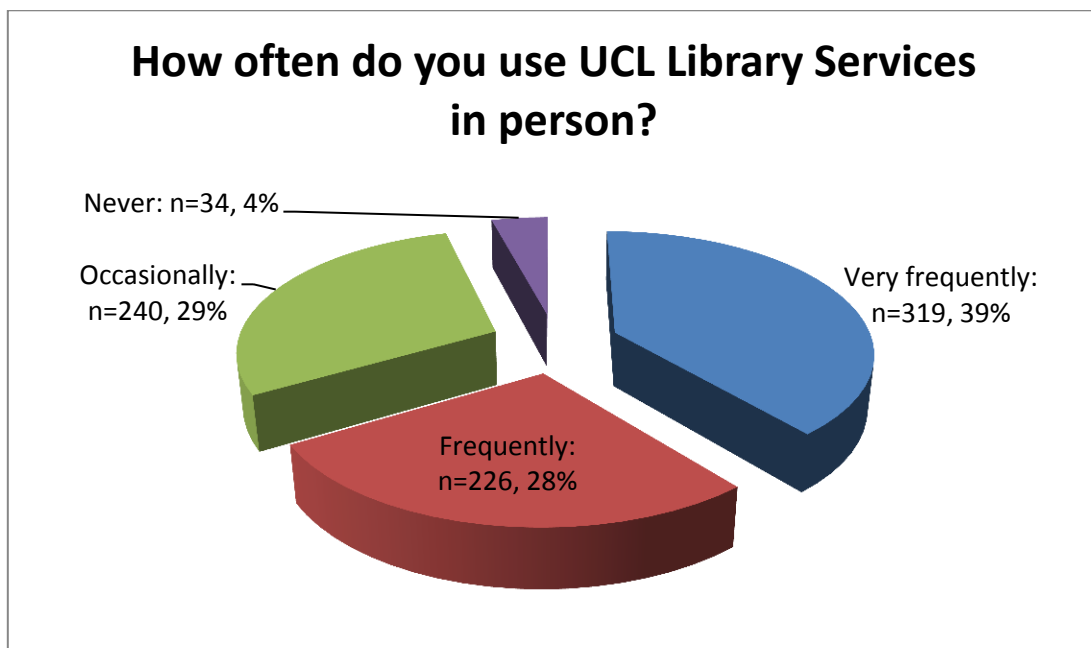
### How useful did you find the training? (n=283)



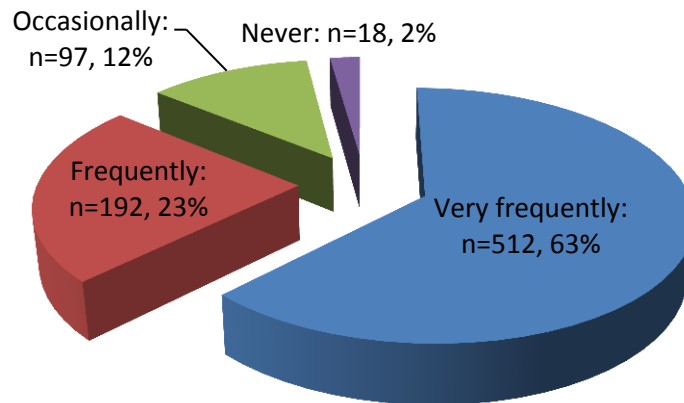
Of the 536 respondents who did not attend a training session offered by UCL Library Services, the main reasons for not attending were that they were unaware such courses were offered (36%), that topics were not relevant (28%) or that sessions were held at inconvenient times (27%).



The majority of respondents (67%) visited UCL library services in person 'Very frequently' or 'Frequently' and even more respondents (86%) use UCL Library electronic resources and web pages 'Very frequently' or 'Frequently'.

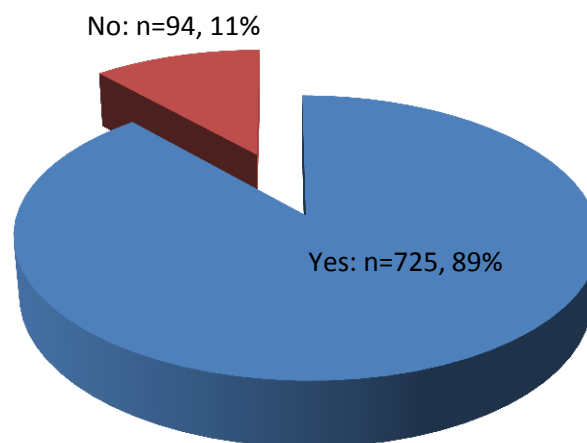


## How often do you use UCL Library electronic resources/web pages?



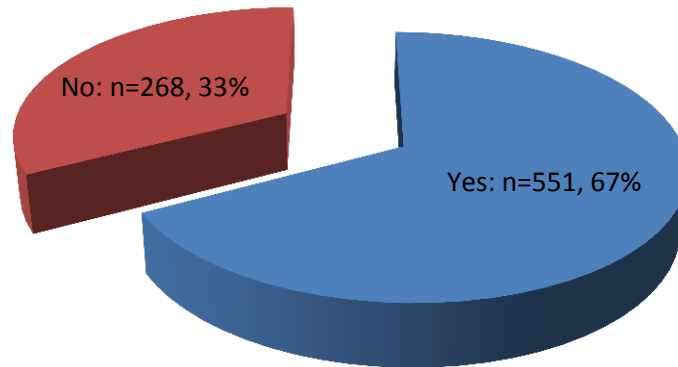
The vast majority of students (89%) found the extended opening hours during term-time and pre-exams to be convenient. A smaller majority (67%) found the summer vacation opening times to be convenient. Overall, the majority of respondents (54%) found UCL staffed services (e.g. enquiry desks, Subject Librarians, email help and issue desks) to be 'Very useful'.

## Are term-time and pre-exam extended opening hours convenient?

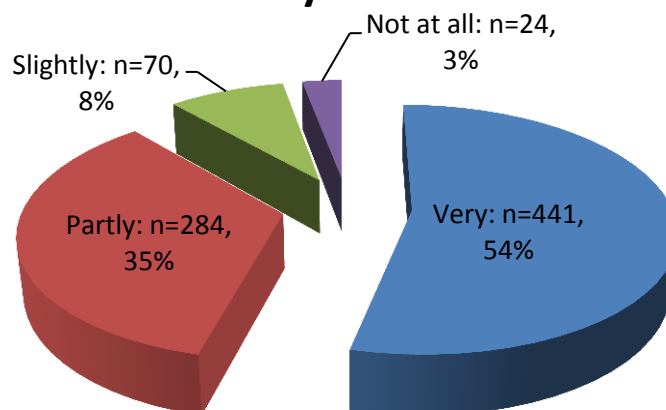




### Are summer vacation-time opening hours convenient?



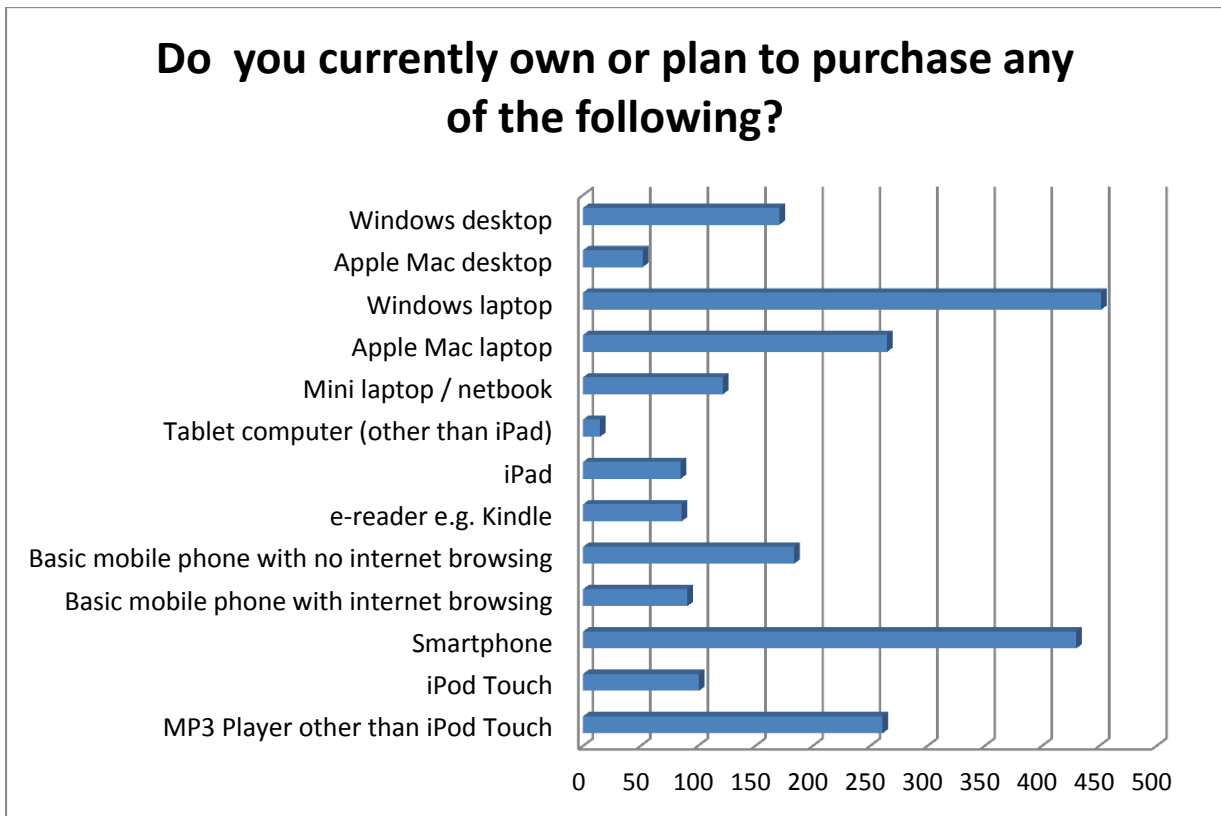
### How useful have staffed services been to you?



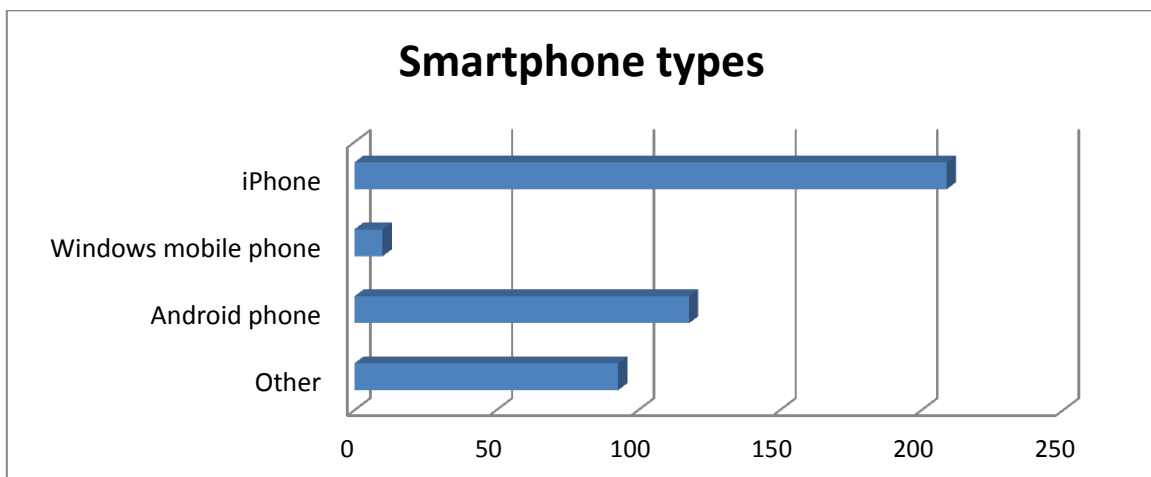
The libraries at UCL generated a lot of feedback. Limited opening hours were a particular cause for complaint, especially during the summer when students needed to work on their dissertations and part-time students who could only use the library at weekends felt particularly put out. Some students felt that more diversified space would be useful, e.g. space to eat lunch or for group work, and a few students complained of overcrowding in the libraries. One student complained that there are not enough printers or scanners. Another student found the interlibrary loans service particularly useful.

## G: Computing

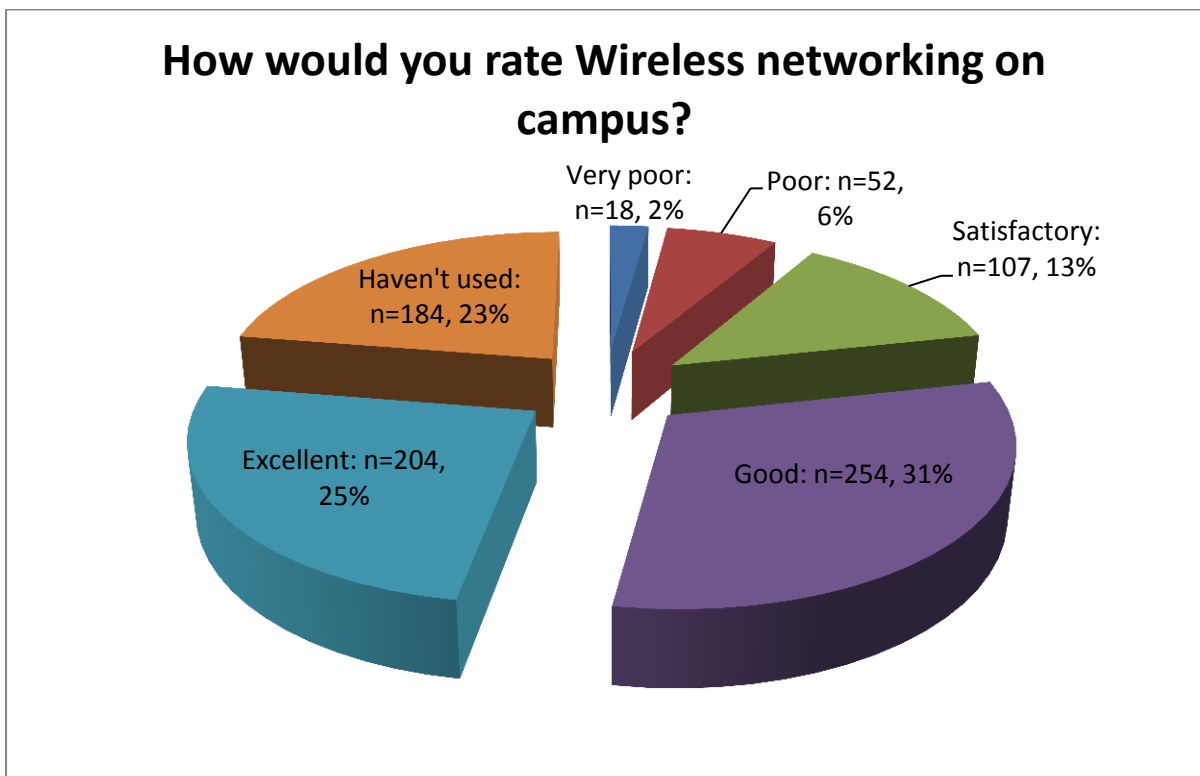
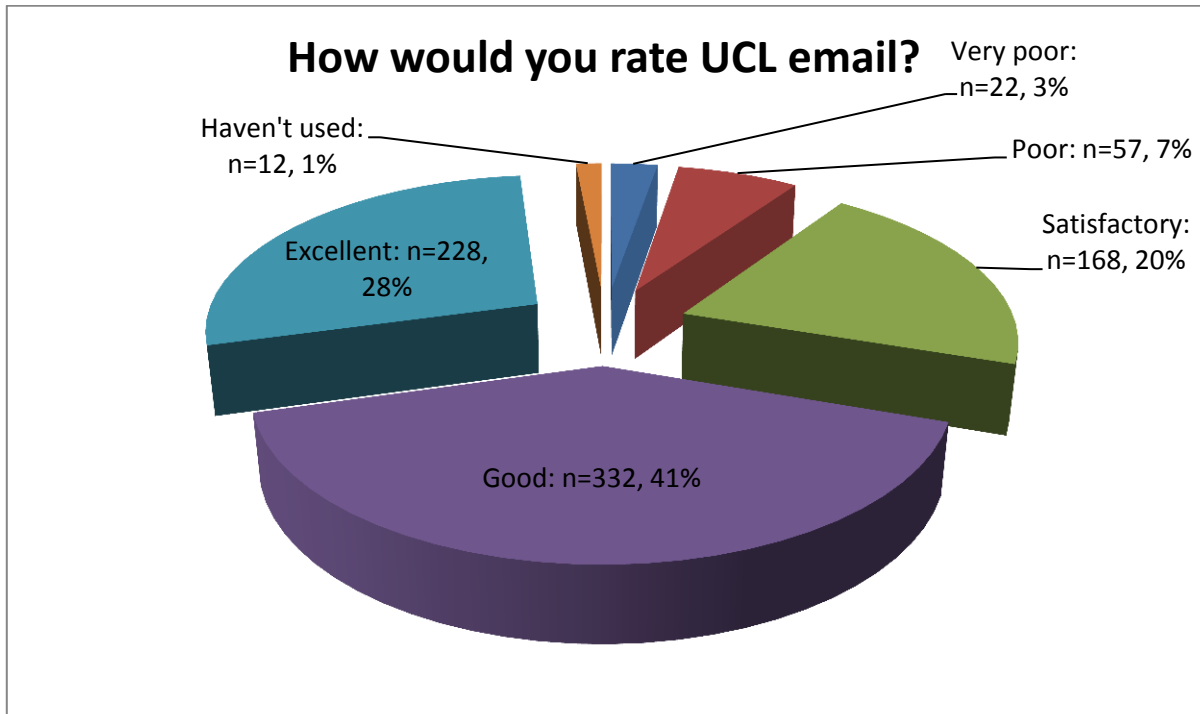
Of the 819 students questioned, a large proportion own or plan to purchase a desktop computer (223 students) and/or a laptop (717 students). Over half of respondents own a Smartphone (430 students), 362 students own an iPod Touch or other MP3 player and 100 students own an iPad or other tablet computer.



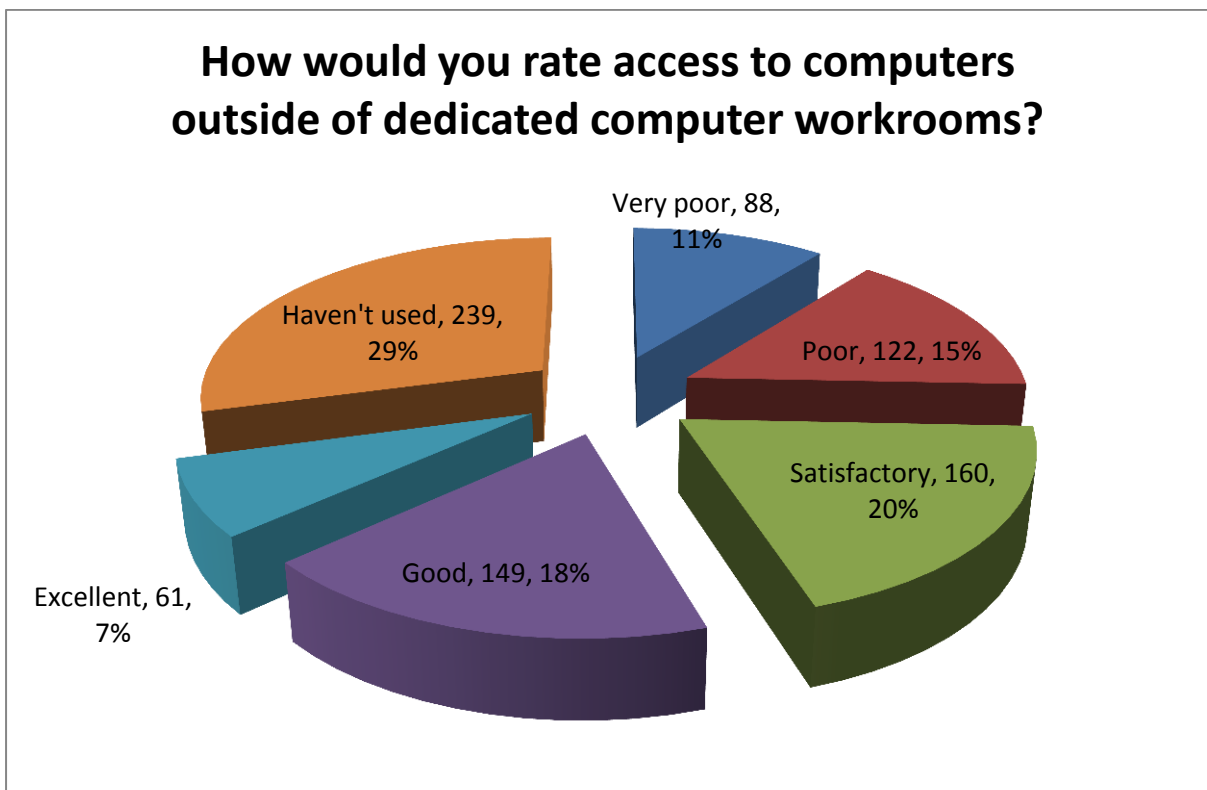
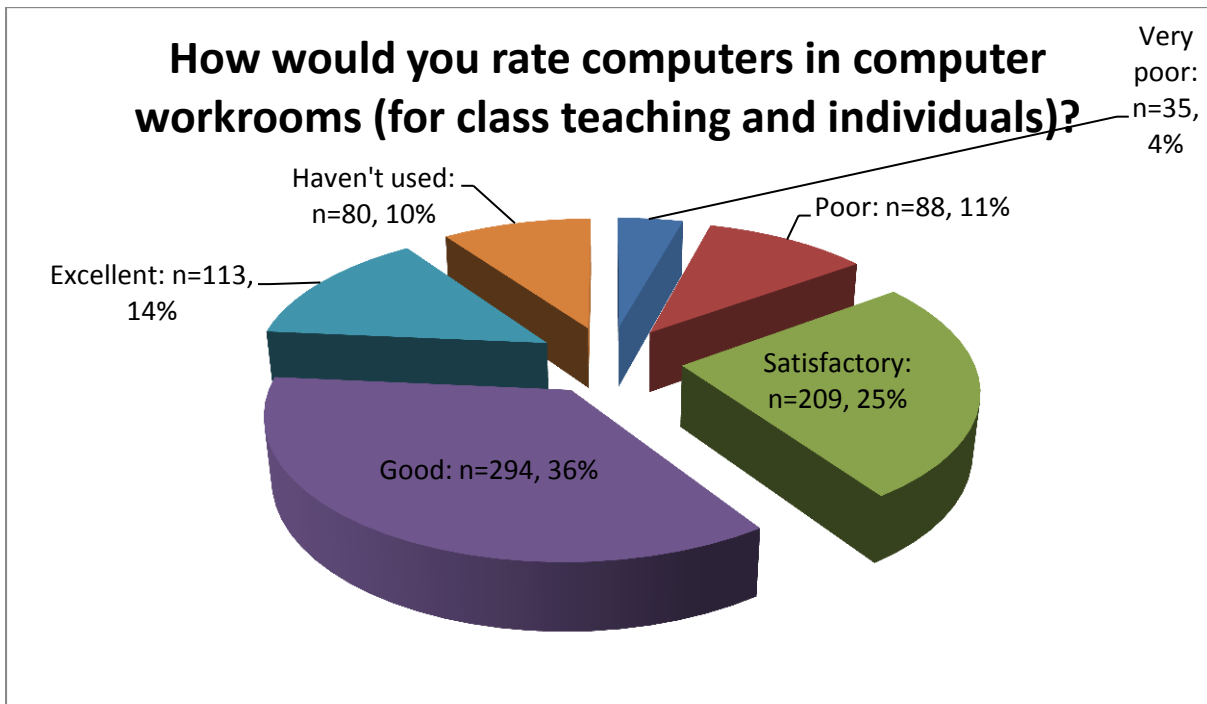
Of the 430 students who own Smartphones, just under half (203 students) own an iPhone and just over a quarter (118 students) own an Android phone.



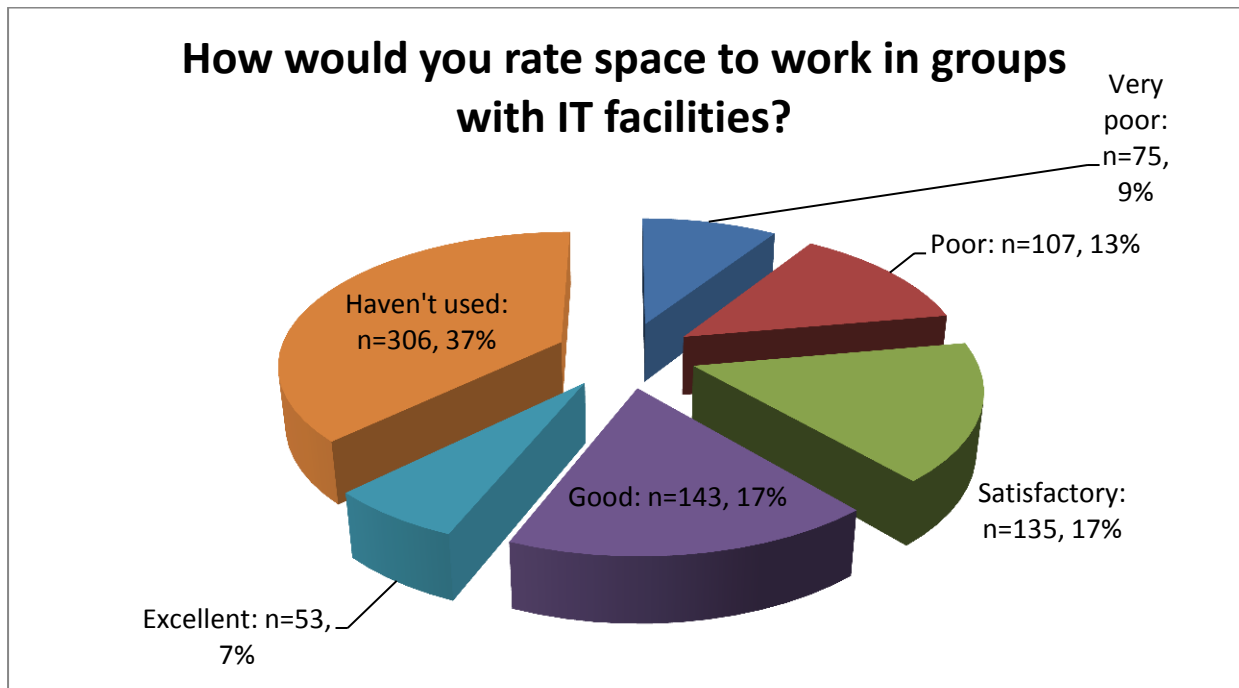
The majority of students (89%) rated UCL's email service as 'Satisfactory' or better and 69% of respondents rate UCL's Wireless networking on campus as 'Satisfactory' or better, with 23% of students never having tried it.



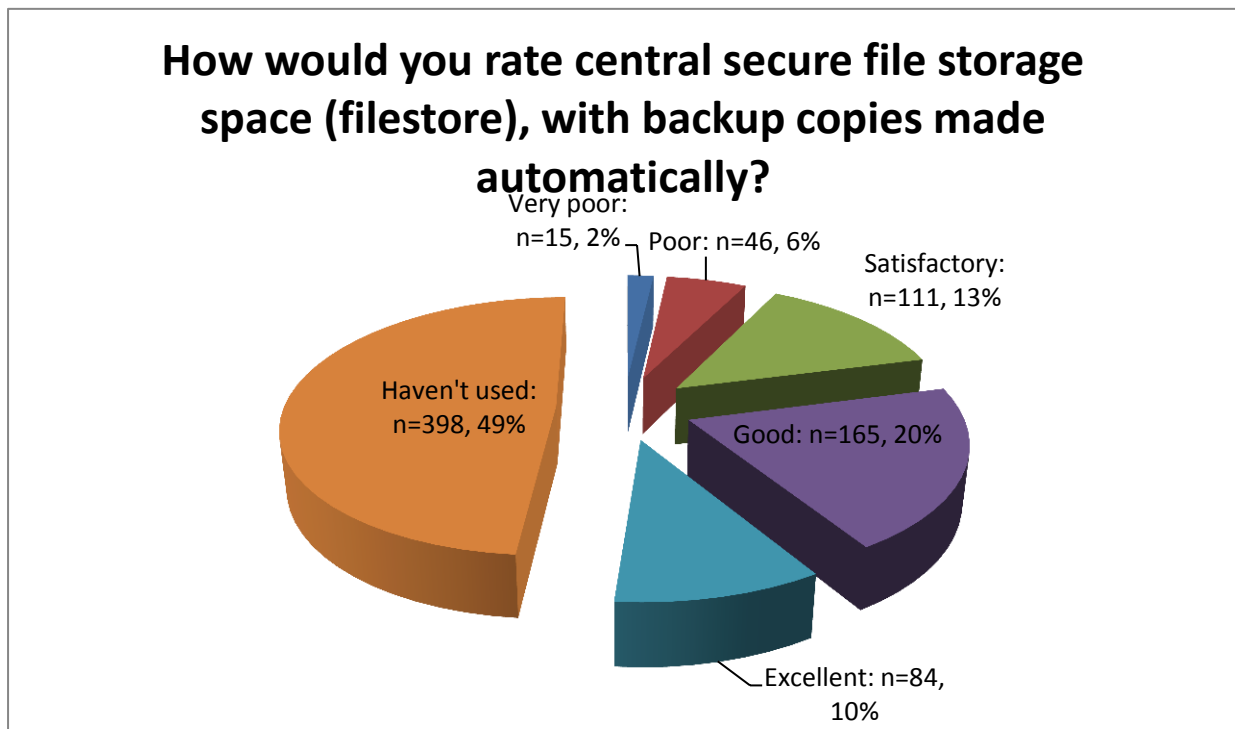
The majority of students (75%) rated UCL's computers in computer workrooms for teaching as 'Satisfactory' or better, with 10% never having used them. Only 45% of respondents rated access to UCL's computers outside of dedicated computer rooms as 'Satisfactory' or better, 26% percent felt access to these computers were 'Poor' or 'Very poor', and 29% hadn't tried to use computers outside of dedicated rooms.



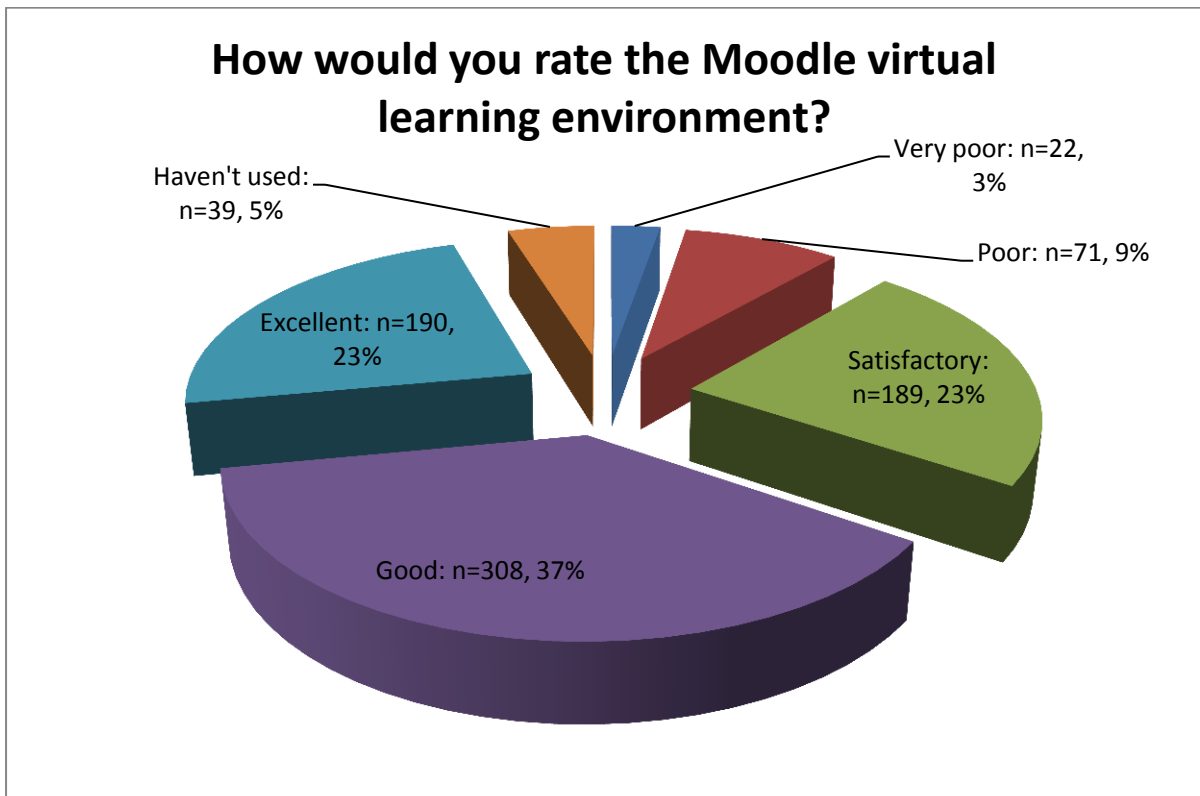
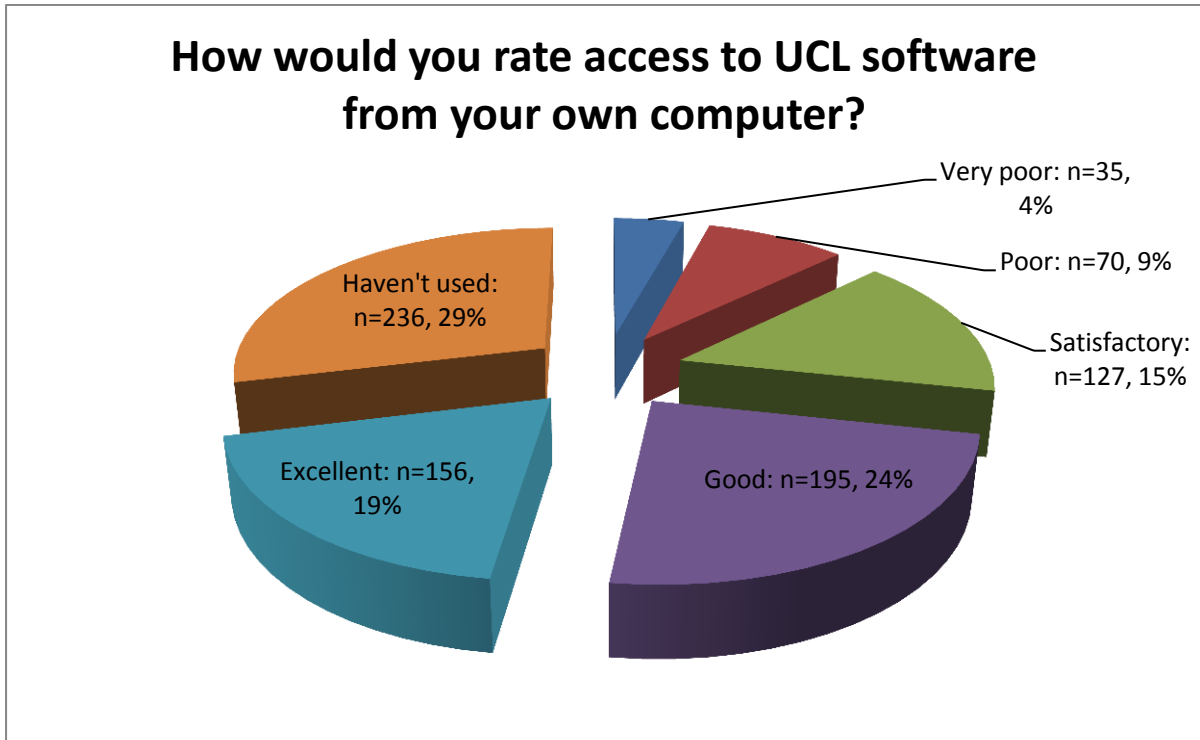
41% of respondents rated the space to work in groups with IT Facilities as 'Satisfactory' or better, with 37% never having used such space.



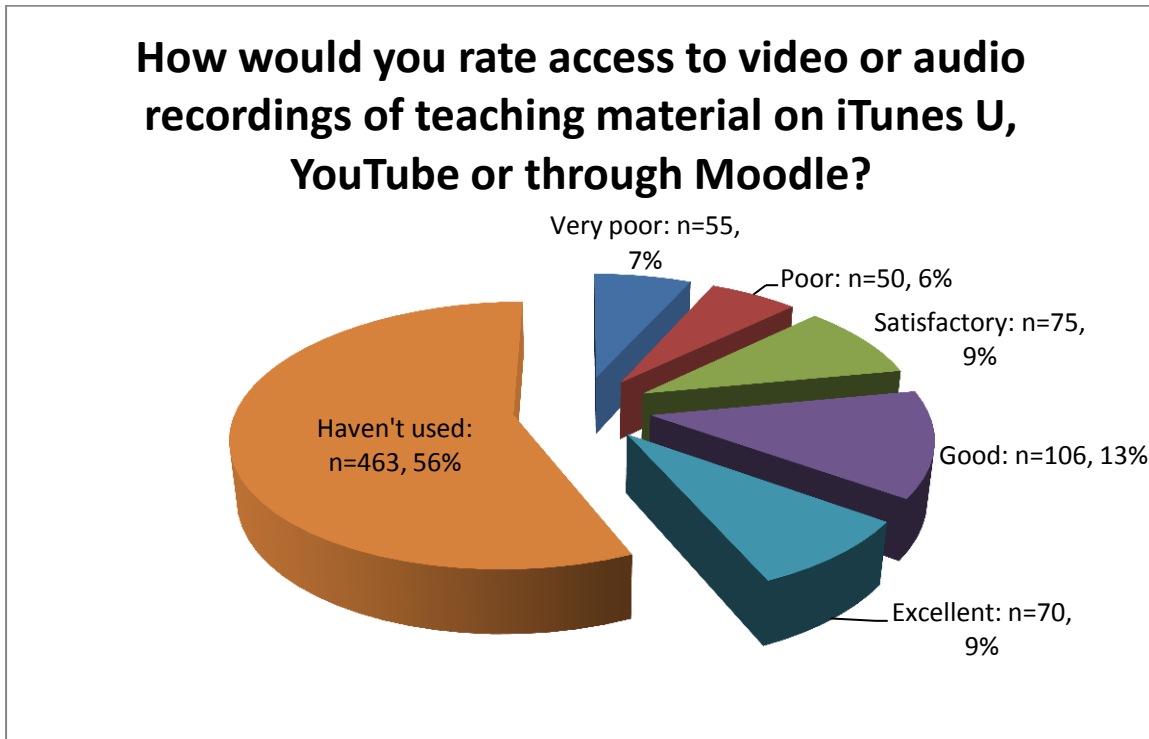
Just over half of respondents (51%) used UCL's central secure file storage space. Of those who did use this facility, nearly all respondents rated it as 'Satisfactory' or better.



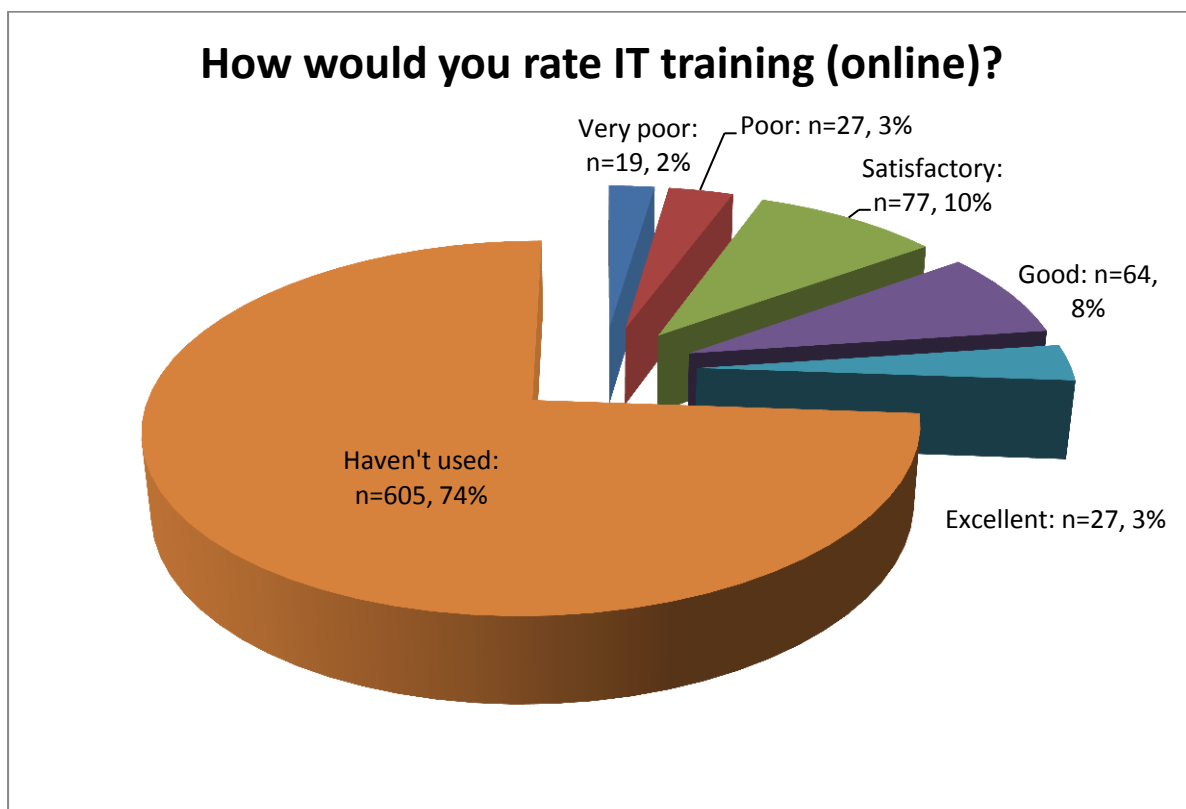
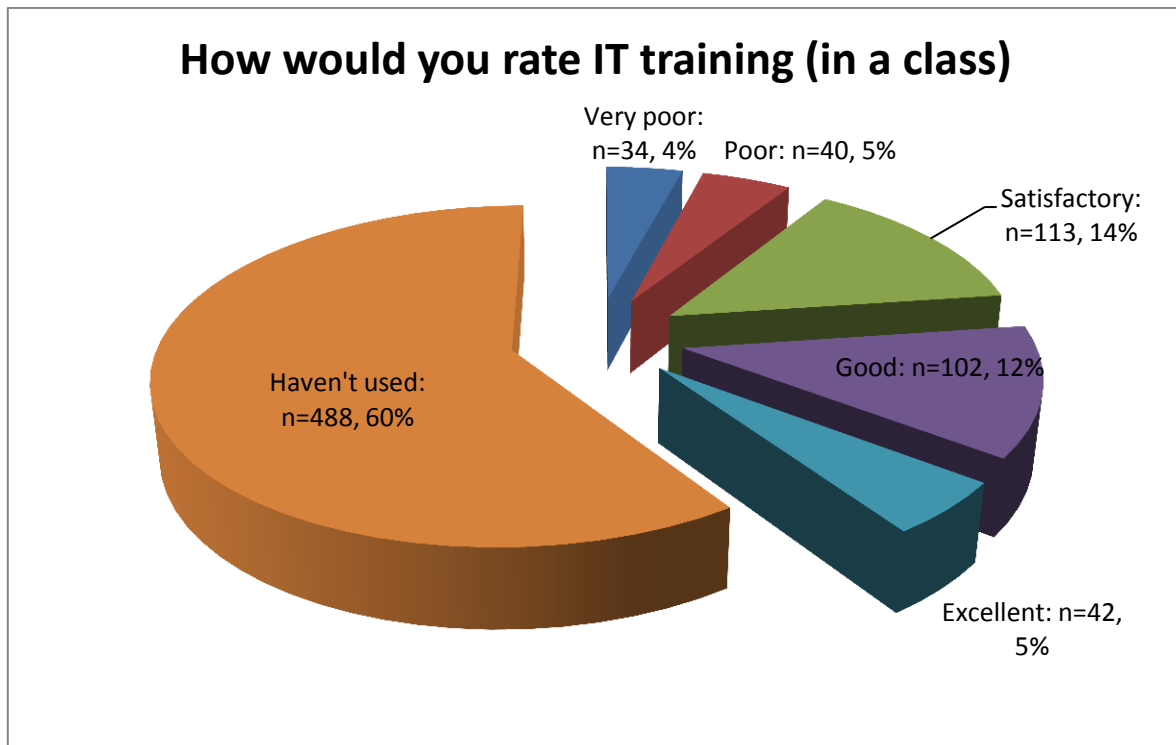
Over half of respondents (58%) rated access to UCL's software from their own computer as 'Satisfactory' or better, where as 29% of students had never used it. The majority of respondents (83%) rated the Moodle learning environment as 'Satisfactory' or better.



Although the majority of respondents had not used video or audio recordings of classes and other teaching materials on iTunes U, YouTube or through Moodle (56%), of those who did a high proportion rated these as 'Satisfactory' or better.

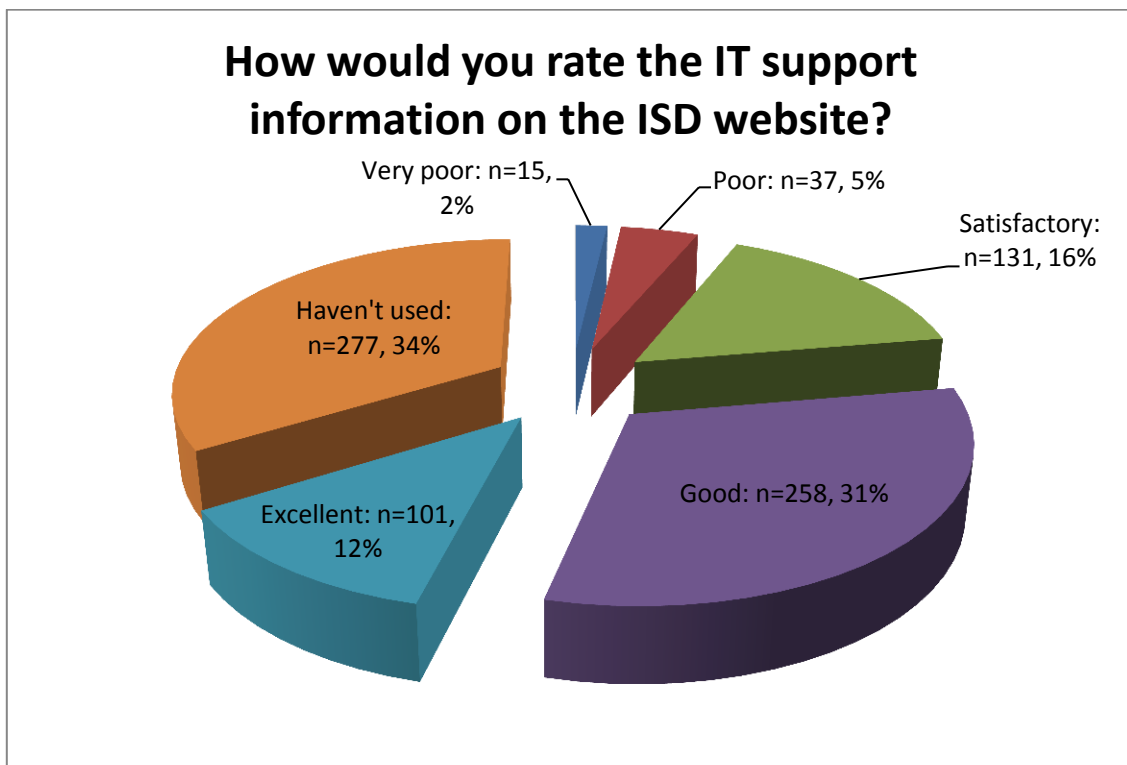
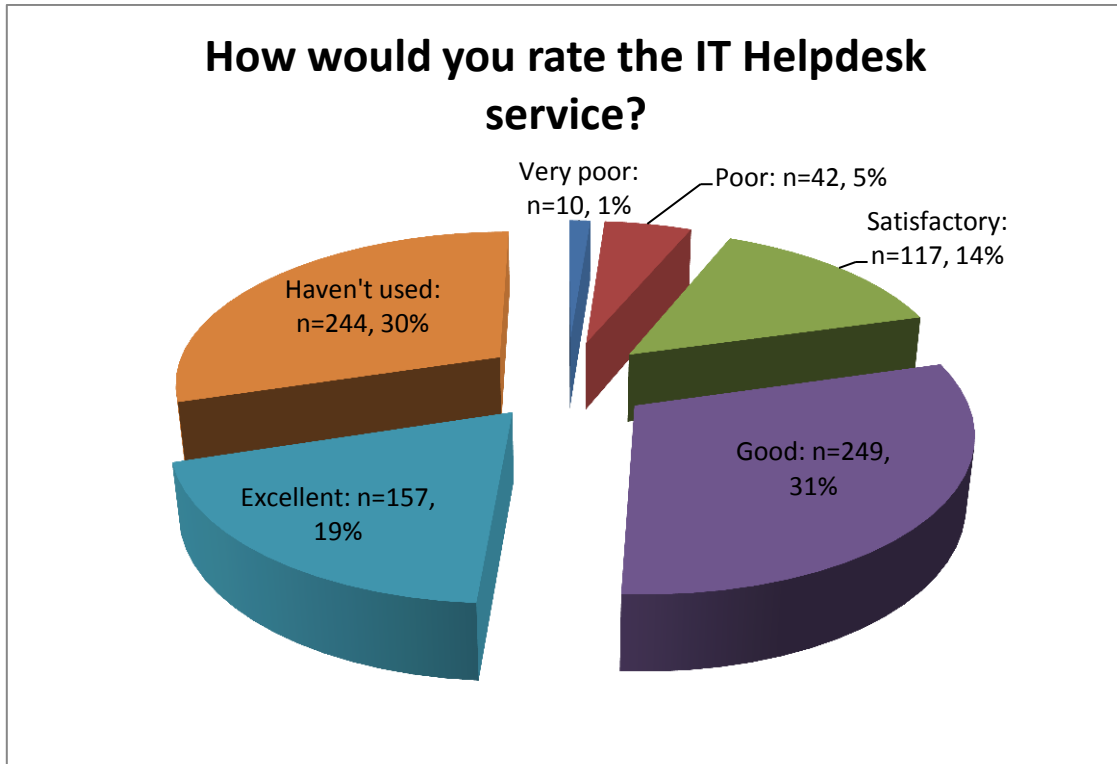


Only 40% of respondents attended IT training in a class, but the vast majority of those who attended rated this as 'Satisfactory' or better. Similarly, of respondents who participated in IT training online, the majority rated this as 'Satisfactory' or better.

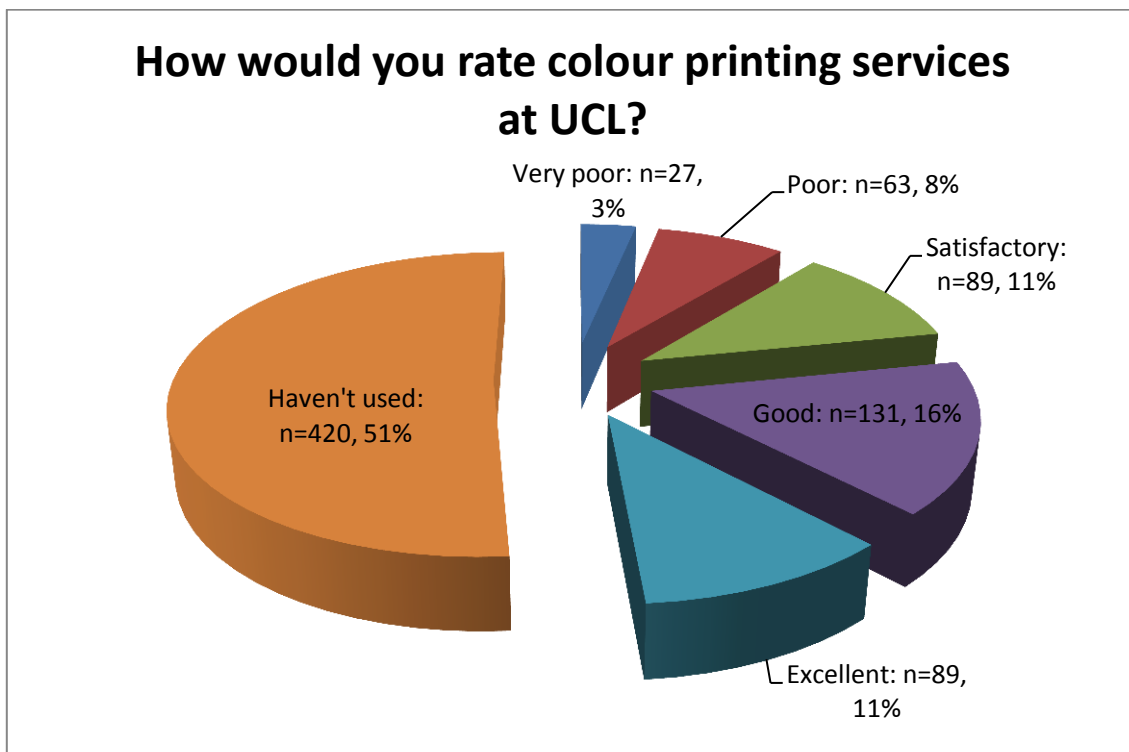
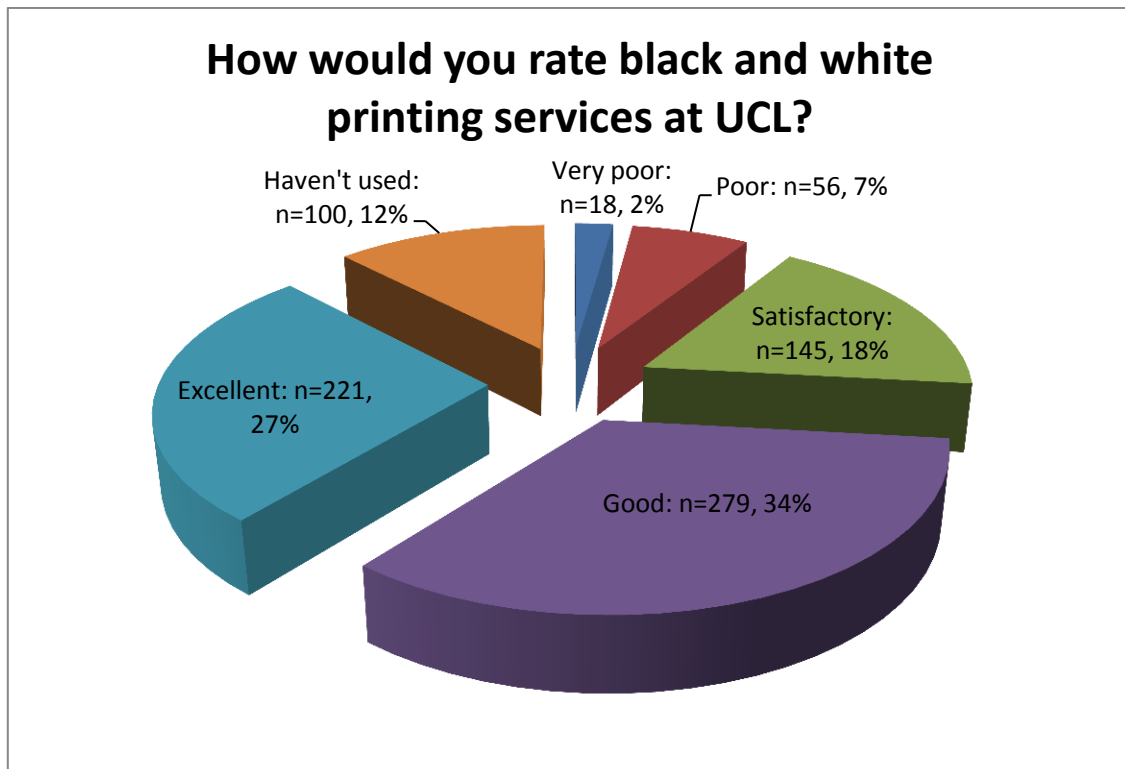




The majority of respondents (64%) rated the IT Helpdesk service as 'Satisfactory' or better, with 30% of students never having used it. A similarly high proportion of respondents (59%) rated the IT support information on the ISD website as 'Satisfactory' or better, with 34% of students never having used it.

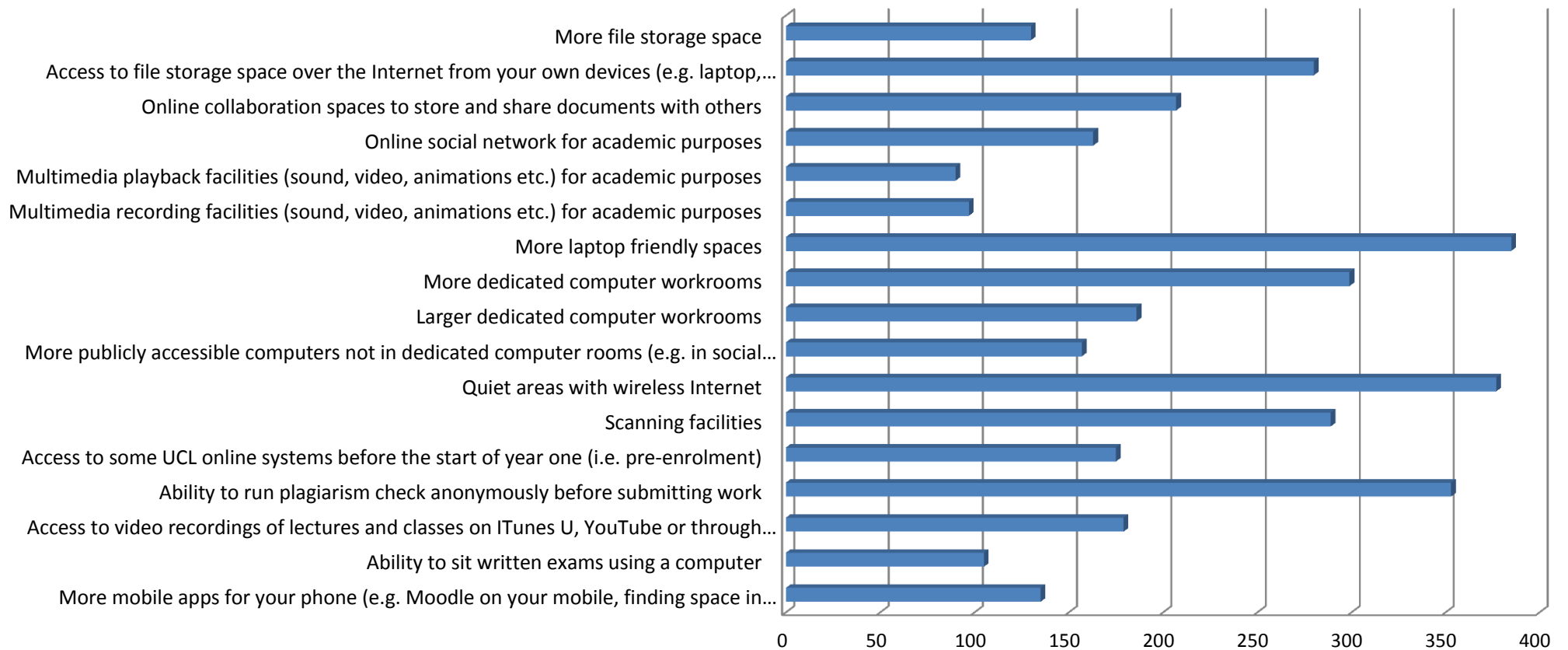


Of the 88% of respondents who use UCL's black and white printing service, the majority of respondents rated this as being 'Satisfactory' or better. Only 49% of respondents use UCL's colour printing service and again nearly as high a proportion of respondents rated this as being 'Satisfactory' or better.



When asked what new or extended services students would use, most commonly cited responses were that they would make use of more laptop friendly spaces, quiet areas with wireless internet, the ability to run anonymous plagiarism checks prior to work submission and access to file storage from personal devices.

## Would you use the following new or extended services if they were offered?



When asked what are the best things about UCL's IT provision, student comments included:

- Dedicated clusters for certain departments / postgraduates.
- Good Wi-Fi access
- Access to Moodle, e-journals and previous examination papers
- IT help leaflets in the library (ICH library) were very useful
- Computers run at a good speed, there is good storage space and it is reassuring to have the IT help desk nearby.
- Good support / Friendly staff / Excellent helpdesk
- Availability of the Citrix system and ability to log into WTS from home
- The free antivirus F-secure
- All the free printing and efficient printers
- Availability of computers
- Ability to keep email address after graduation
- Remote access to mathematical packages

When asked what are the worst things about UCL's IT provision, student comments included:

- Not enough computers in quiet areas and in general
- Running out of network storage space
- Complicated wireless system
- A lot of outages/downtime/maintenance
- Computer clusters often being booked for classes or events
- Need many more computers in Postgraduate area
- Lack of wireless internet access in University of London housing
- The lack of working printers leading to very long queues.
- No printer accessibility from own computer.
- The computers do not seem to be totally networked
- Slow computers
- No wireless network support for linux netbooks

- IT training (course specific) not provided.
- Limited knowledge of ISD staff
- Inability of UCL computers to run a program overnight
- Bad administration and service
- Printing system can malfunction uses all your credits, but doesn't print anything
- Email system not intuitive
- Not enough plugs for laptops
- Access to journals off site can be problematic
- Some of the software accessible on computer workrooms do not use the same version as what's available through Citrix

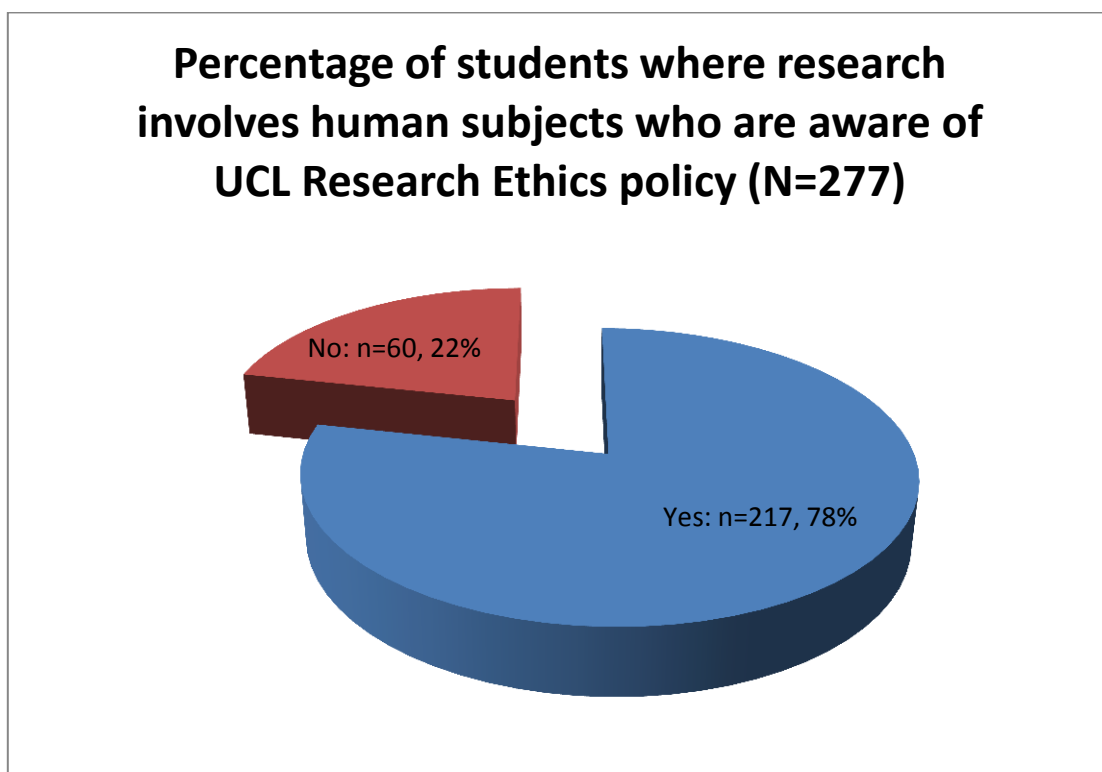
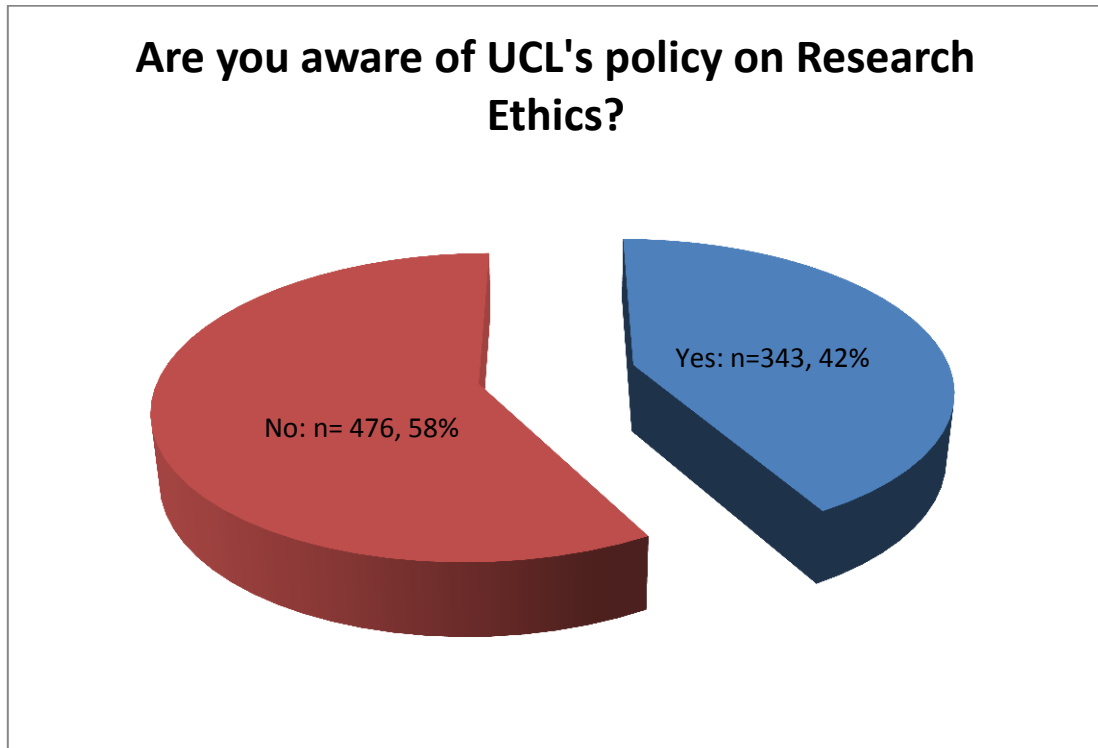
There were a number of further comments about the UCL computing facilities. These described the cluster rooms as at times being loud and crowded, with not enough computers to meet student demand. Some students commented that computer rooms were either too hot or too cold, and others complained about printing services. One student complained that they would like computer keyboards and mice to be washed more often.

## H: Ethics

The data for the survey shows that most research carried out (66%) does not involve human participants.



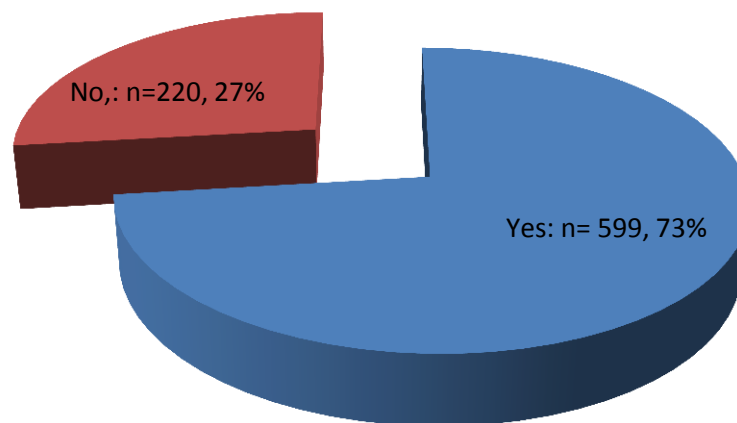
Only 42% of respondents were aware of UCL's policy on Research Ethics, although of the respondents who are involved in research with human participants 78% are aware of UCL's policy on Research Ethics.



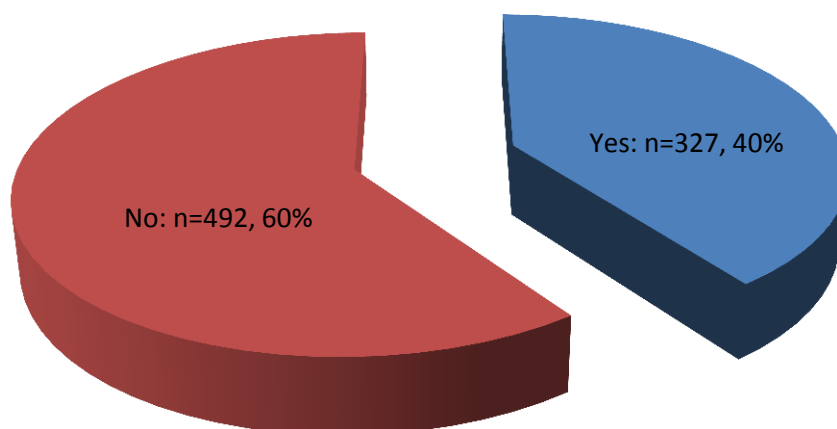
## I: Welfare

Most respondents (73%) know who their Departmental Graduate Tutor is, but far fewer (40%) know who their Departmental Graduate Student Representative is. Only 34% of respondents know who their Student Academic Representative (StAR) is.

### Do you know who your Departmental Graduate Tutor is?

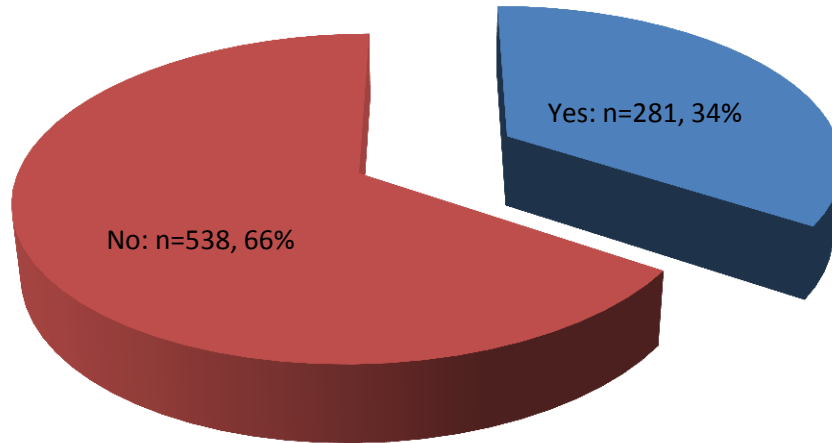


### Do you know who your Departmental Graduate Student Representative is?



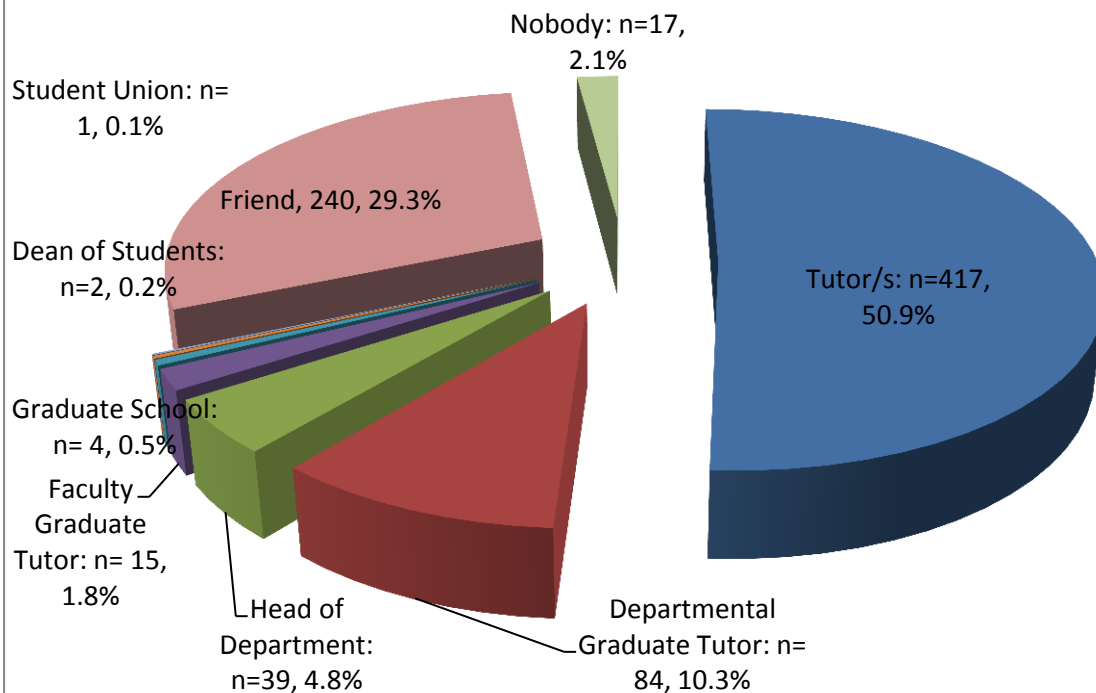


## Do you know who your Student Academic Representative (StAR) is?

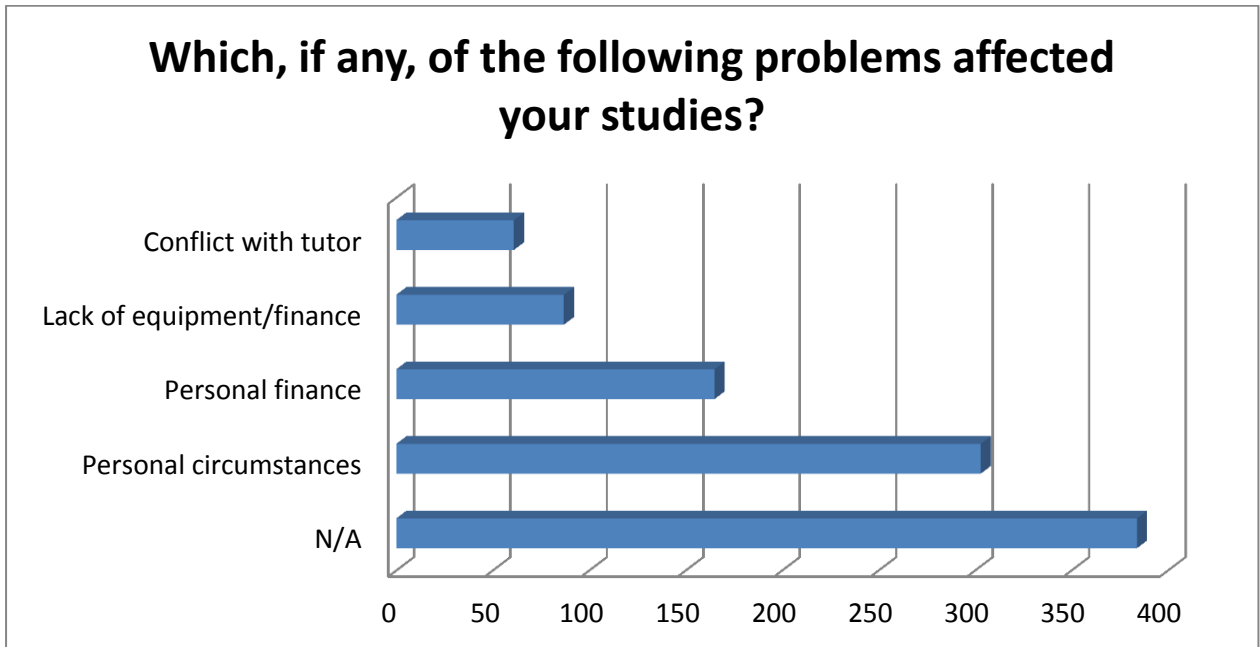


Approximately half of students would confide with their Tutor, in the first instance, if they had a problem concerning their studies.

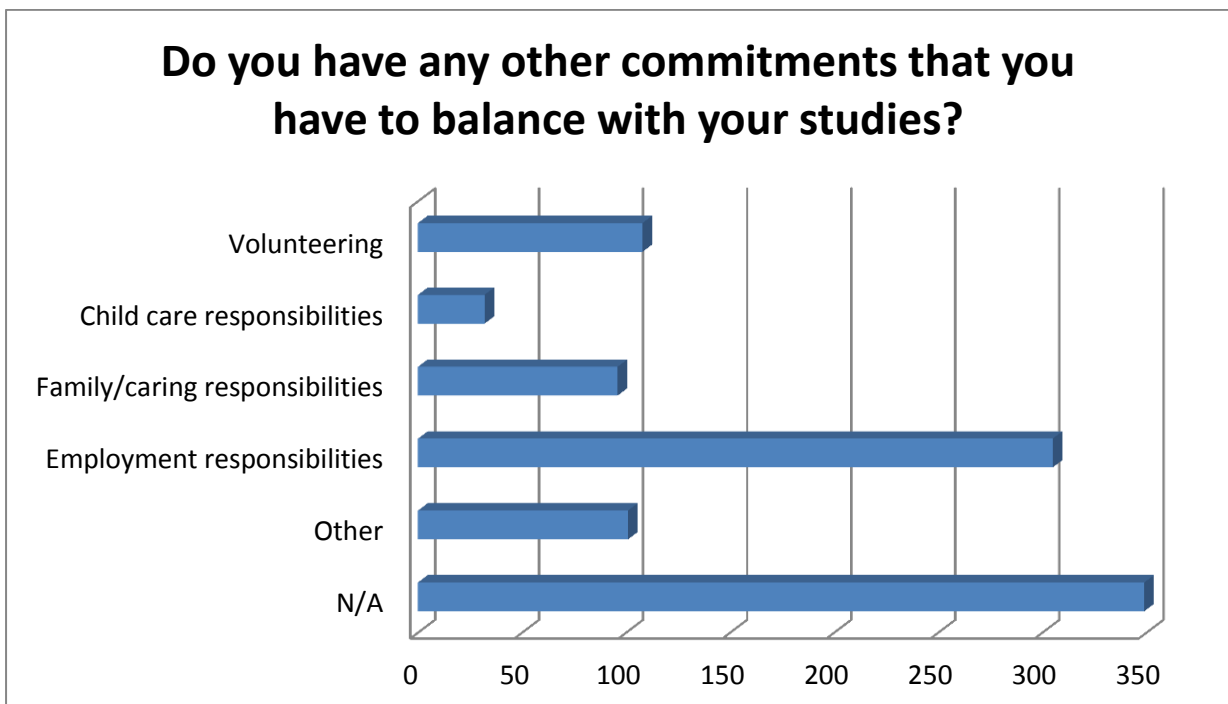
## In whom would you confide, in the first instance, if you had a problem concerning your studies?



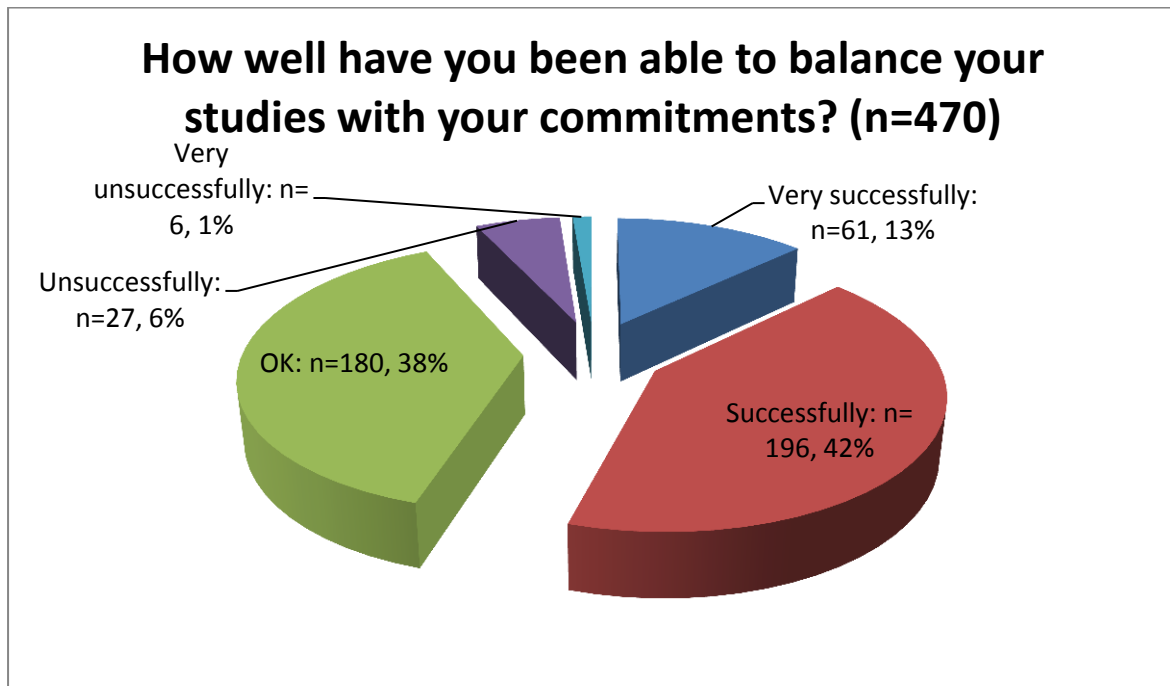
At least 303 of the 819 respondents experienced problems that affected their studies. The most common problems were personal circumstances and personal finances.



At least 305 of the 819 respondents balanced their studies with other commitments. The most common of these were employment responsibilities.



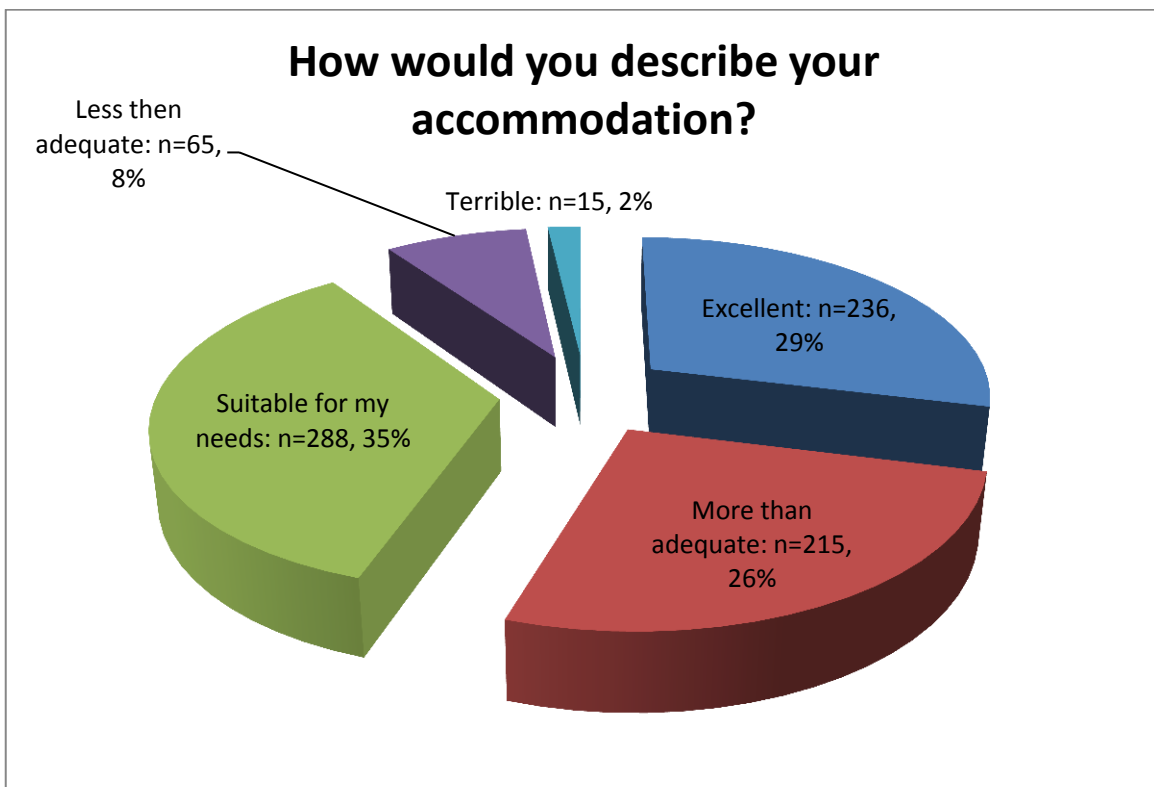
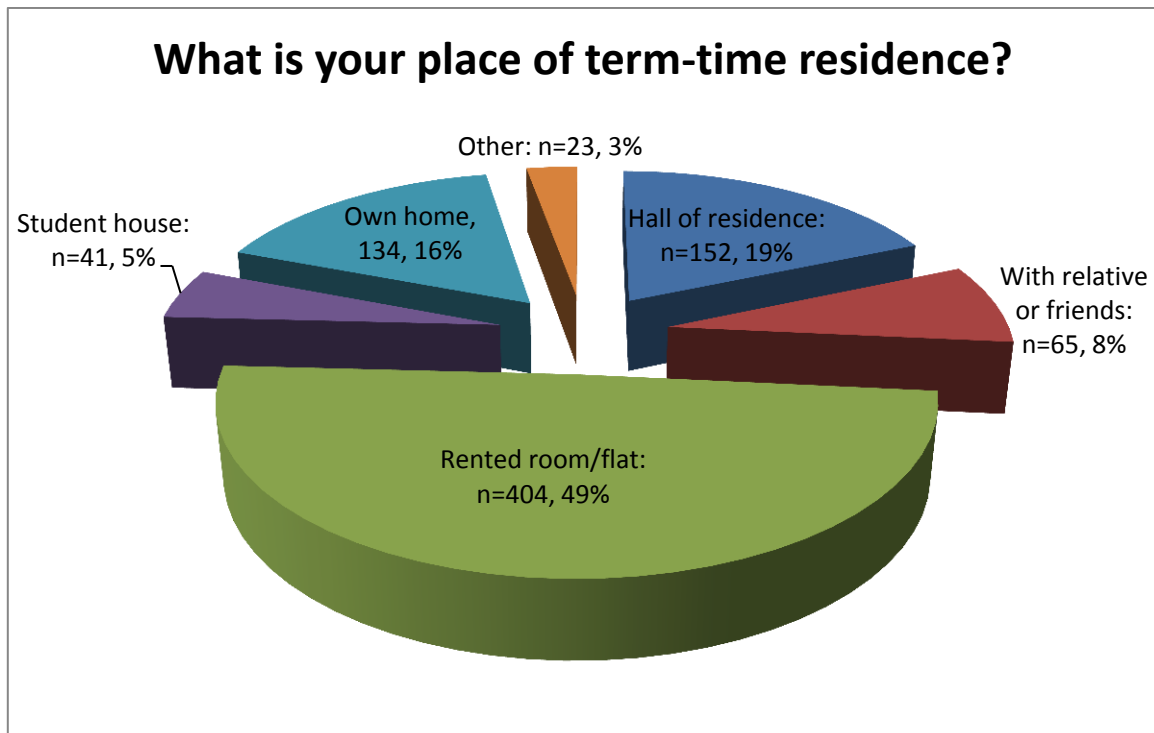
Of the 470 respondents who have commitments that they must balance with their studies, 55% felt that they were able to do so 'Successfully' or 'Very successfully'.



There were some suggestions that came out of the additional comments on welfare. These included requests for more help with the process of applying for a visa, as well as UCL adopting an online application system. Some students felt that more support could be provided for students who have children, especially in providing timetable information in a timely manner to allow for childcare to be arranged. Some students felt that more support could be provided for students with disabilities, and others felt that the counselling service could do more to get back to their queries in a timely manner. However, other students were very impressed with the number of support services and courses offered to students, e.g. in dealing with anxiety and depression. One student felt that course tutors should improve their knowledge on UCL policies prior to giving students advice.

## J: Housing

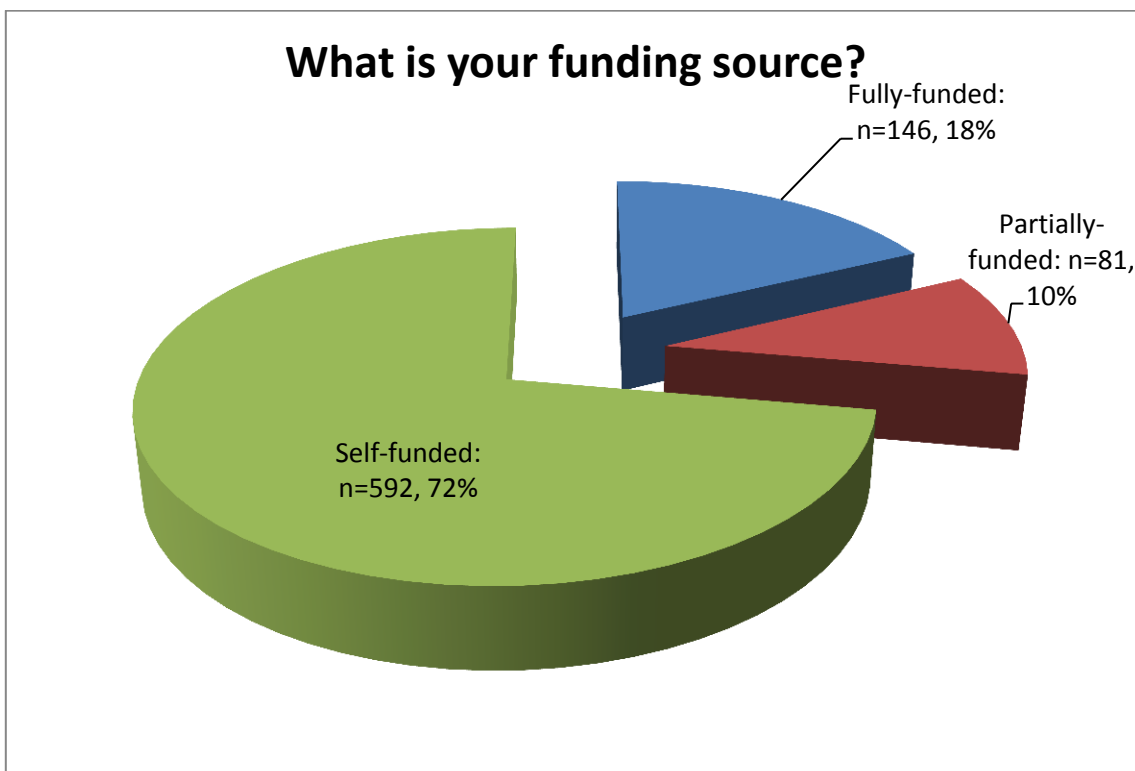
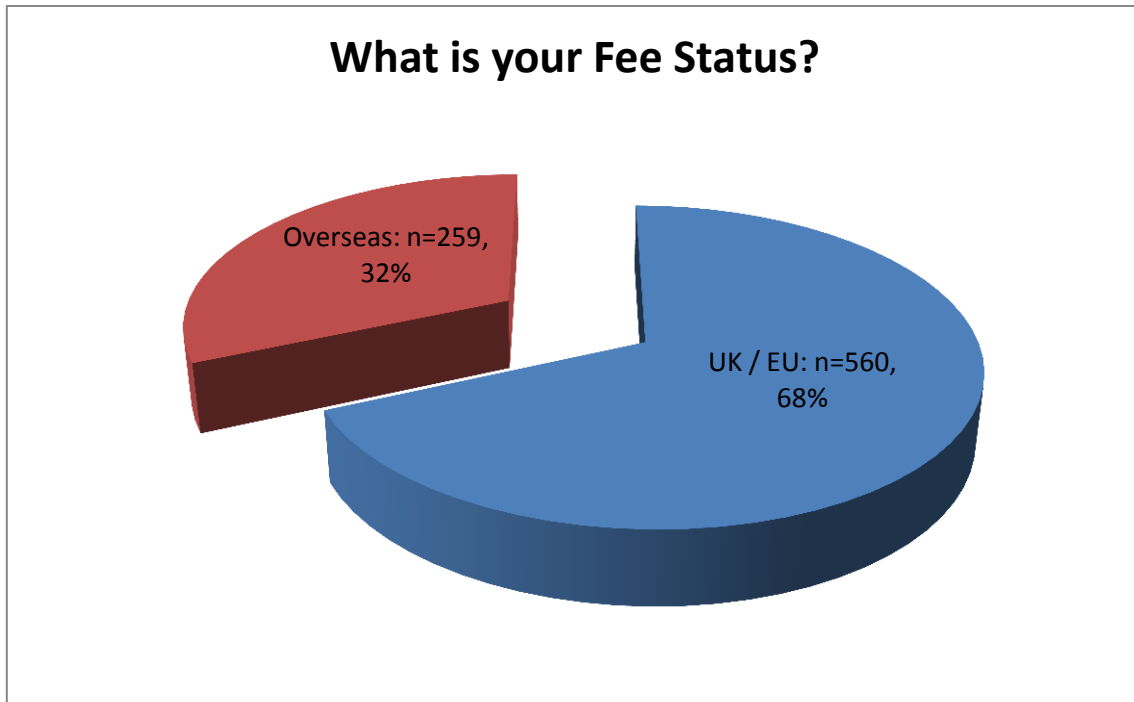
Approximately half of respondents (49%) rented a room or a flat. The majority of respondents (90%) described their accommodation as 'Suitable for my needs' or better.

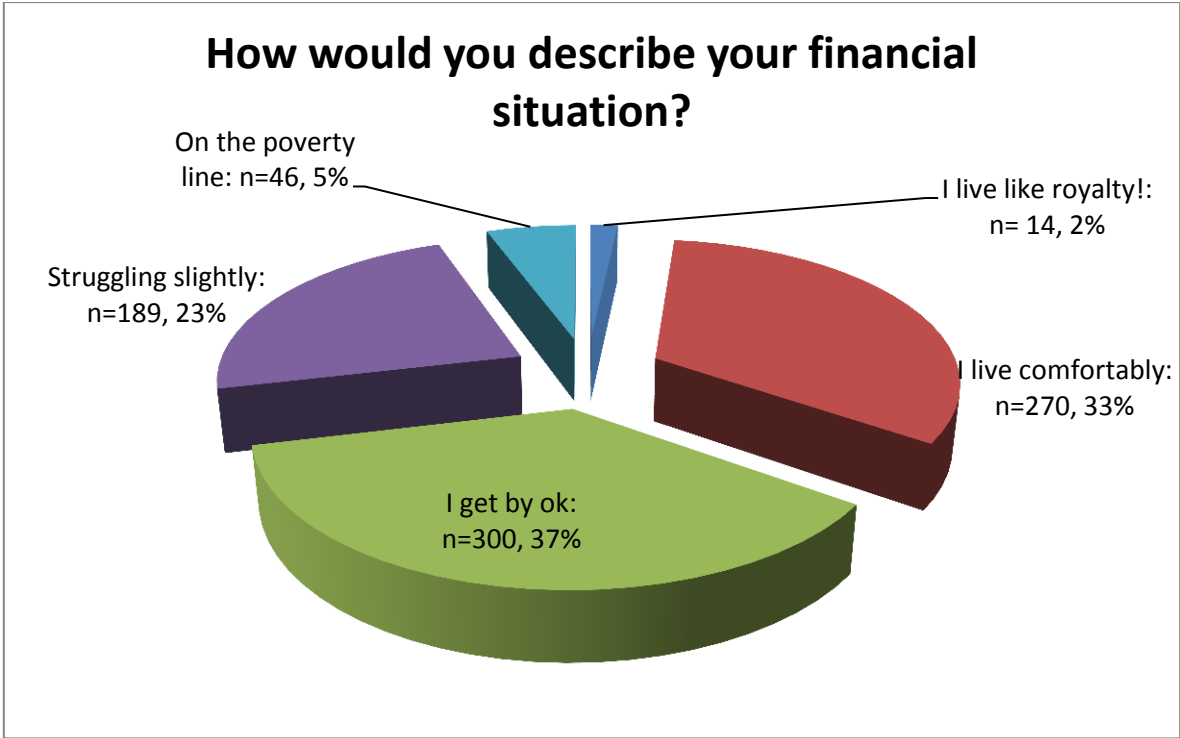


Among the additional comments on housing, students felt that halls of residence felt too much like boarding school accommodation, and are not comfortable for adult students. Other comments suggested that more help should be provided to help students find affordable accommodation in London. One student commented that the online accommodation service is not easy to use.

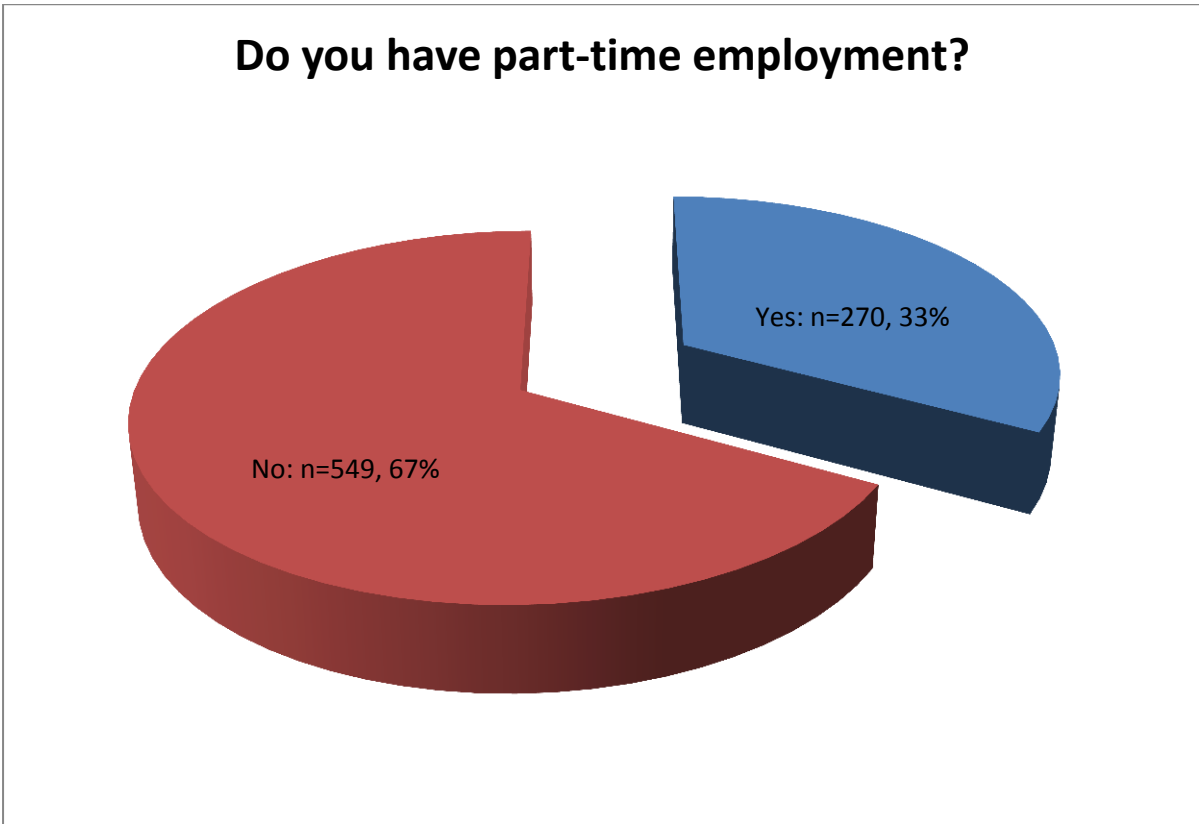
## K: Finances

About a third of respondents (32%) paid international fees and around three quarters of students (73%) were self-funded. The majority of respondents (72%) described their financial status positively.

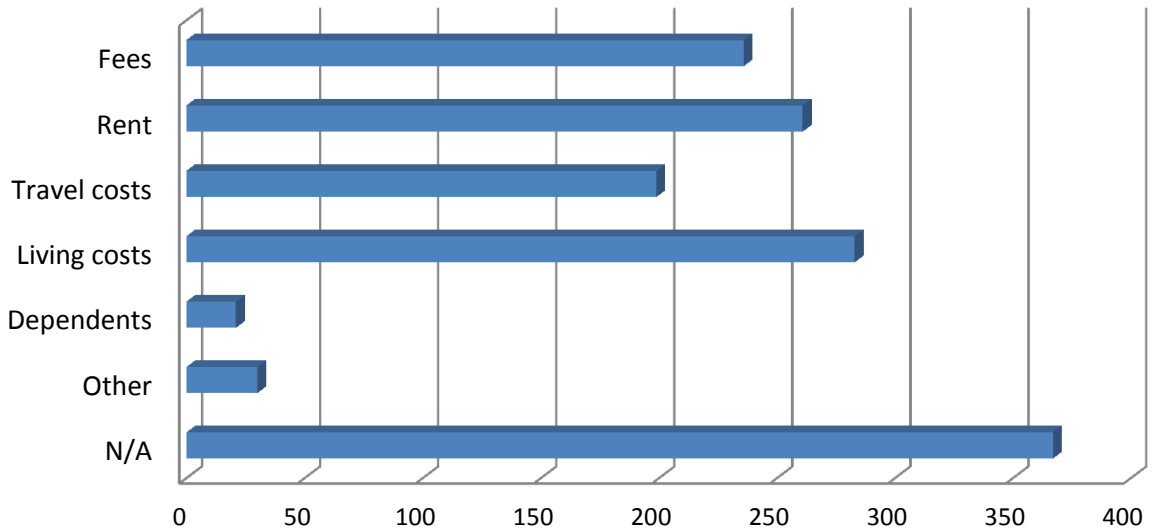




Around a third (33%) of respondents have part-time employment. The most common financial problems experienced were rent, living costs and tuition fees.



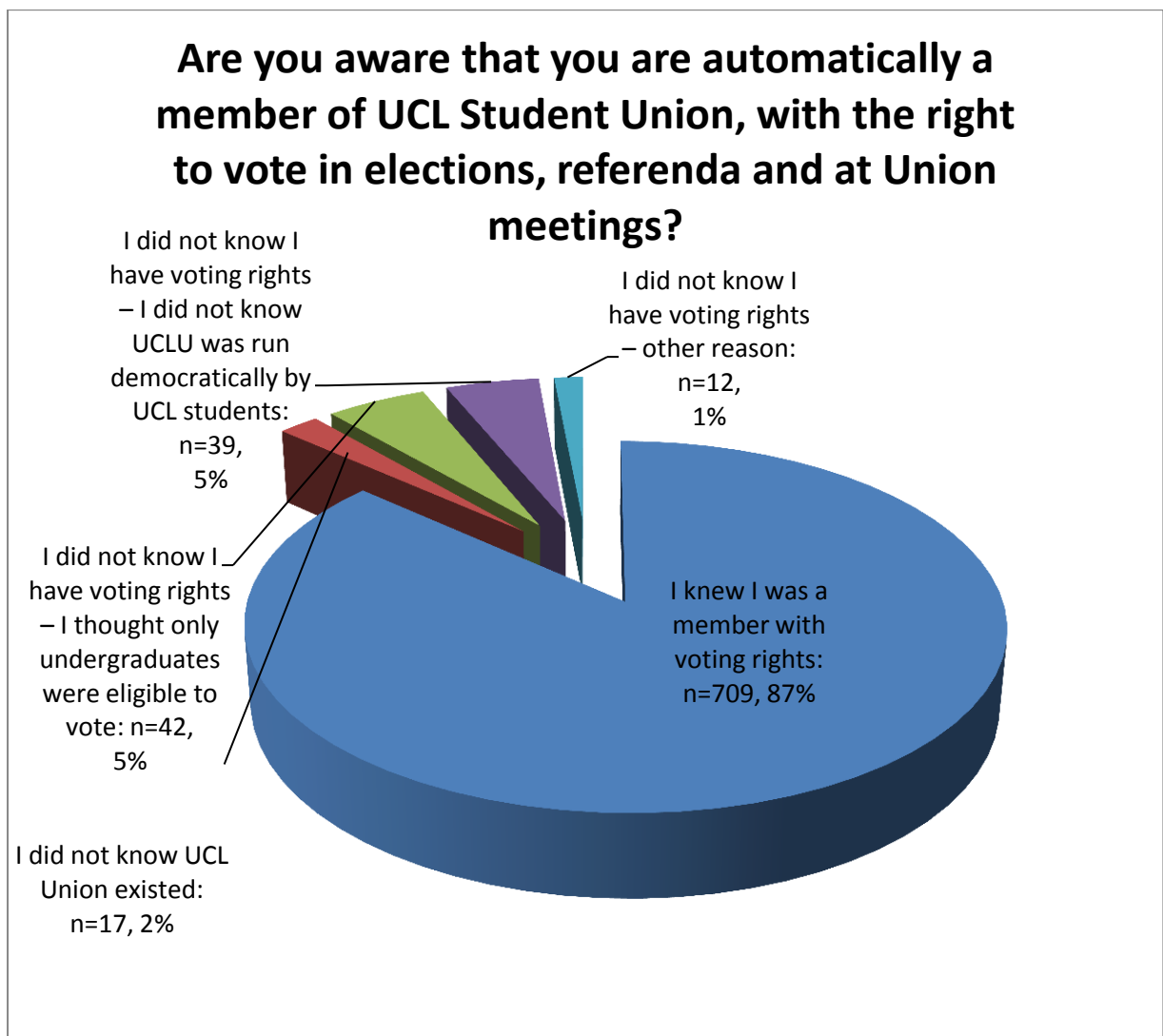
## If you have a financial problem, what is/are the cause(s)?



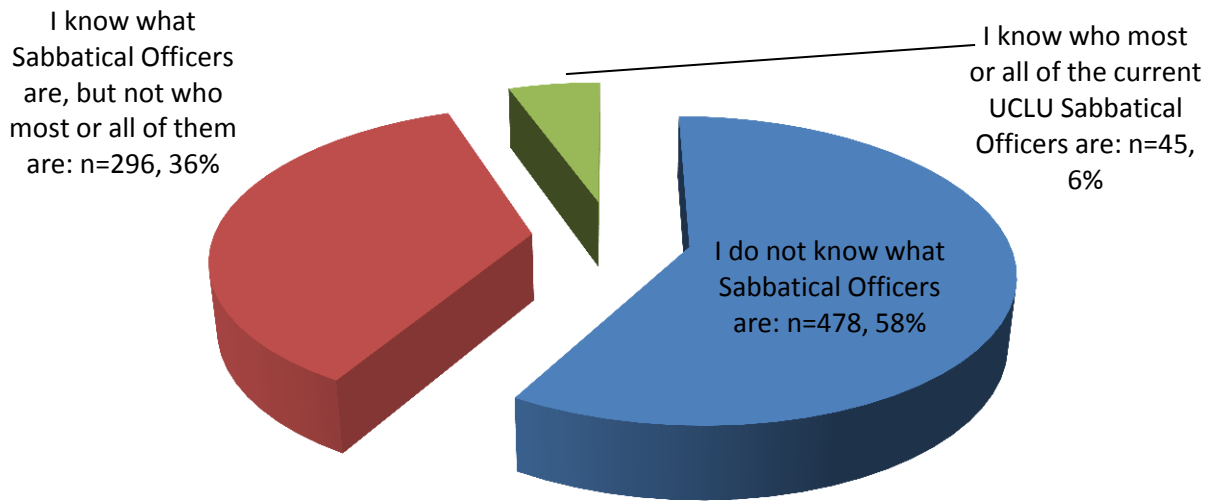


## L: Student Union

A large proportion of respondents (87%) knew that they were members of the Student Union with voting rights.. The majority of respondents did not know what Sabbatical Officers are, with only 6% knowing who all or most of the current Officers are.

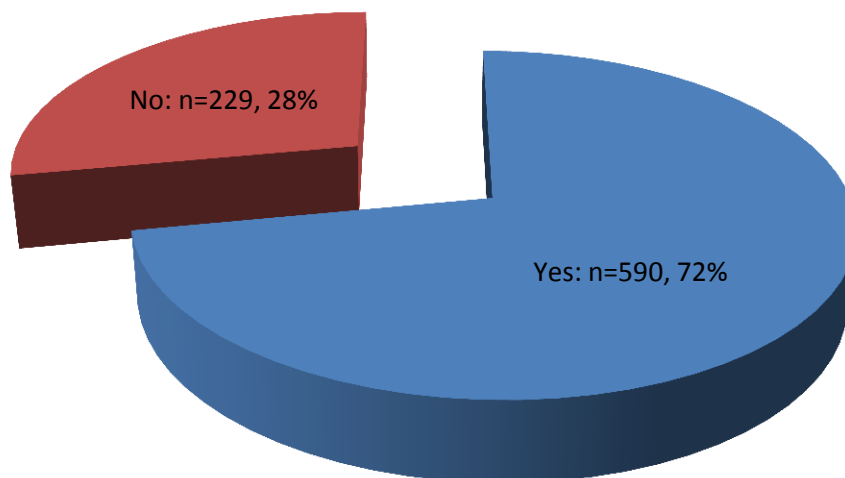


## Do you know what Union Sabbatical Officers are, and who the six current Officers are?

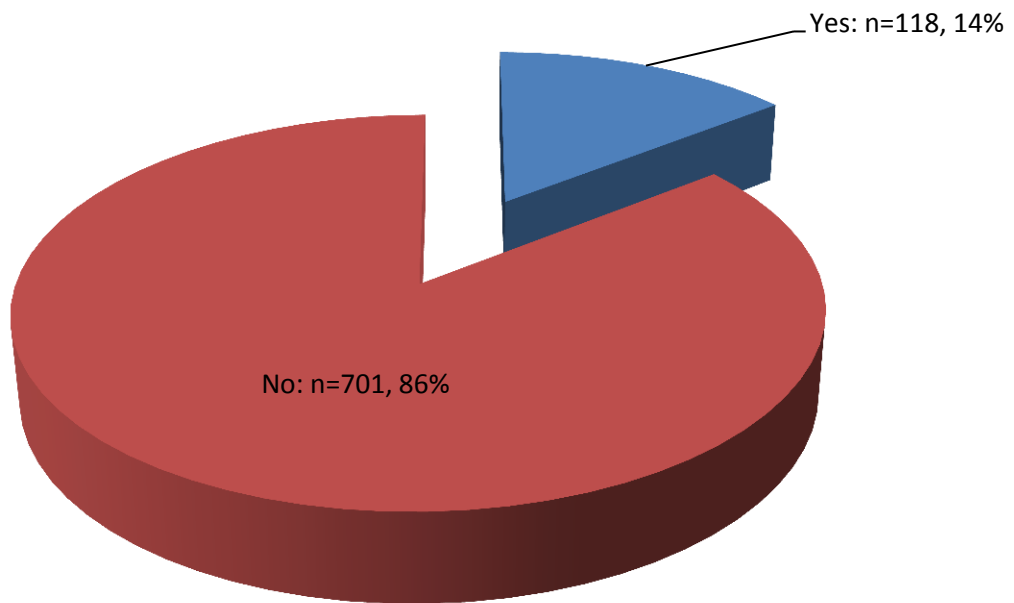


The majority of respondents (72%) are familiar with the Postgraduate Association. However, most (86%) have not attended any PGA events, mainly because they were unaware of them (47%).

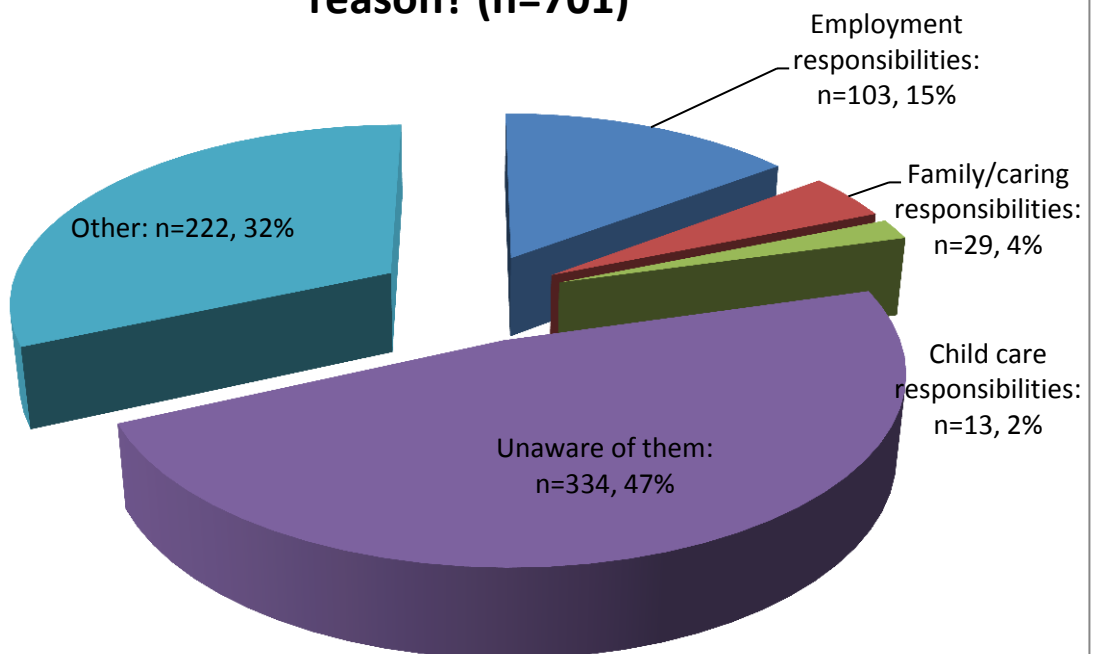
## Are you aware of the Postgraduate Association (PGA) at UCL Union



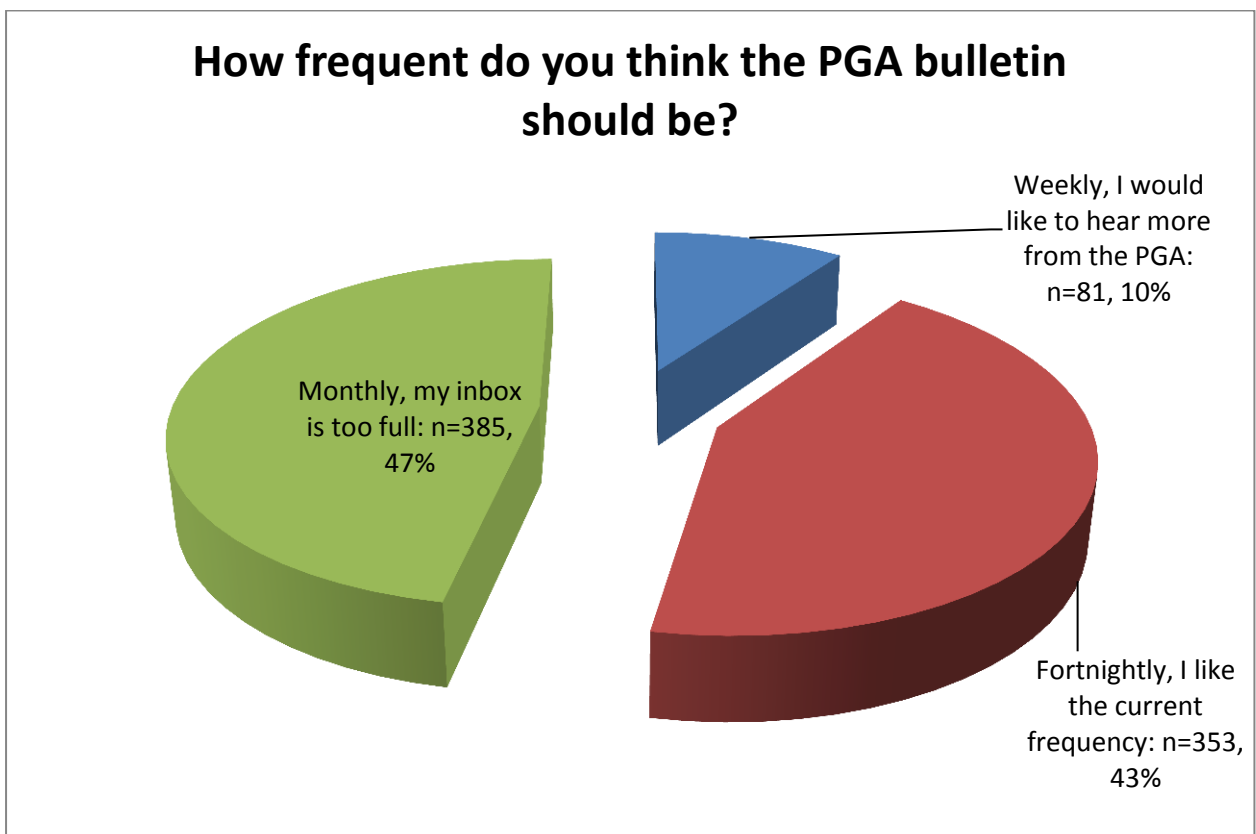
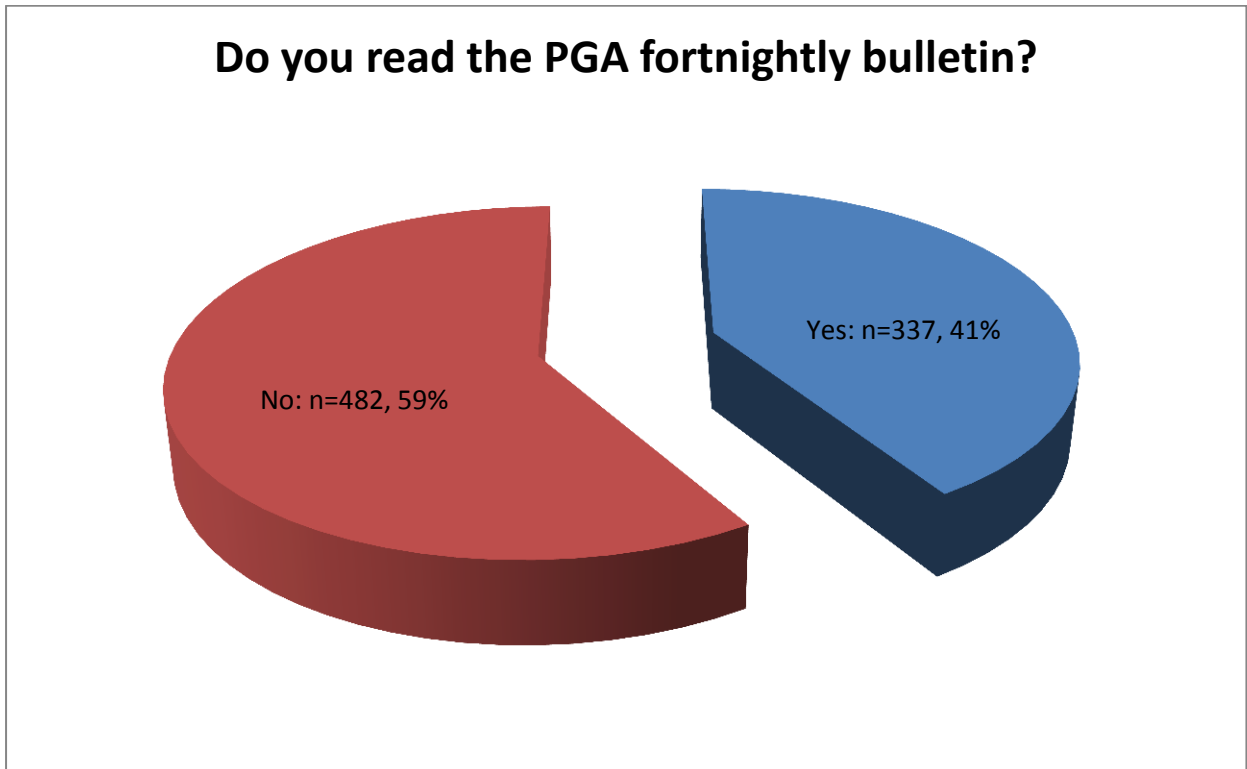
## Have you attended any PGA events?



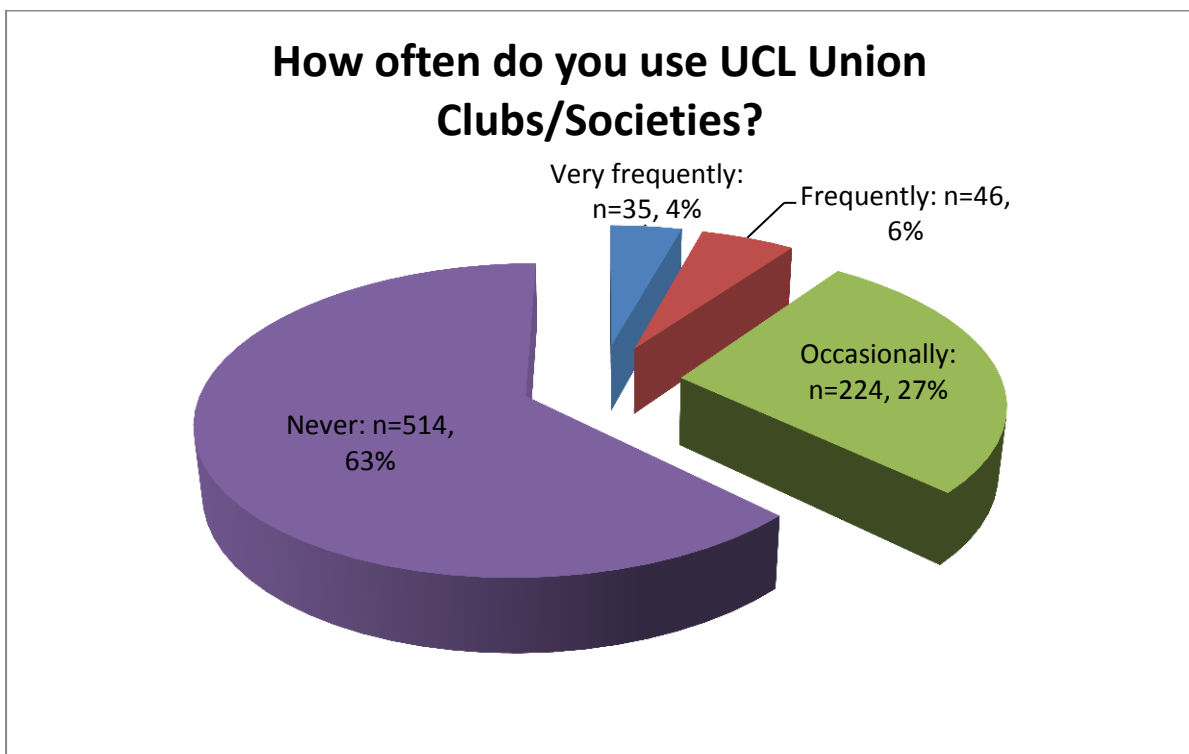
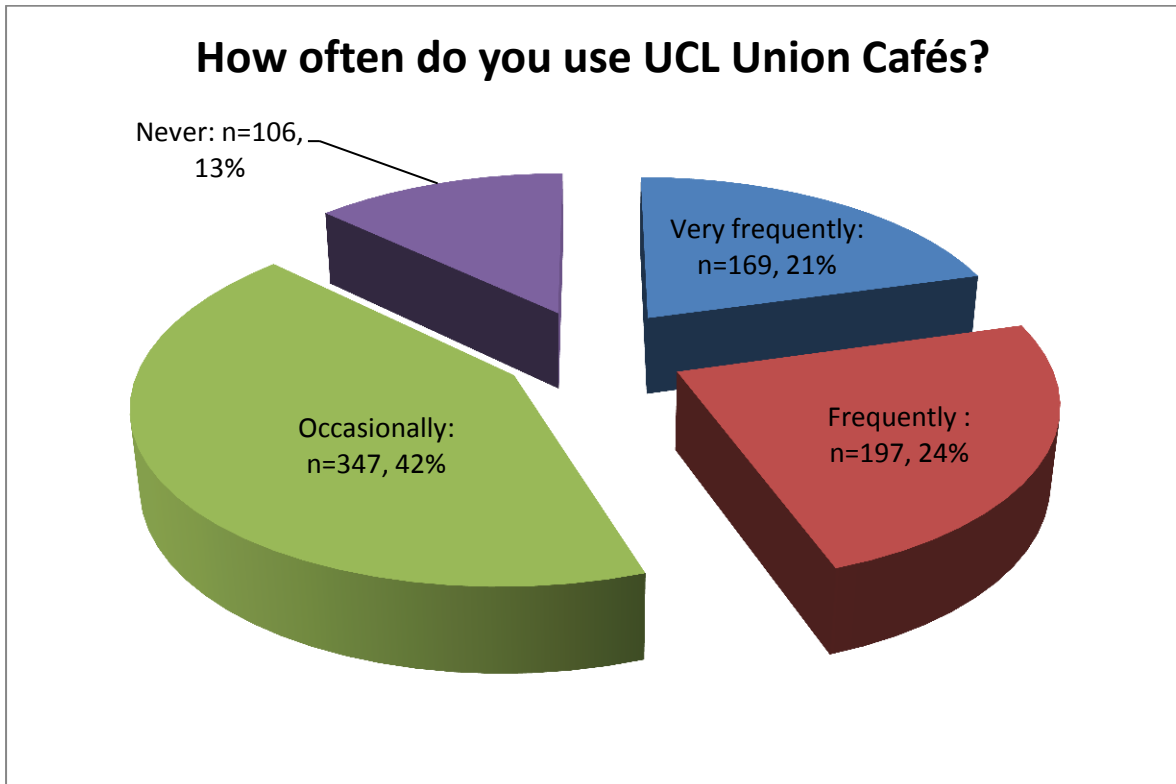
## If you did not attend a PGA event, what was the reason? (n=701)



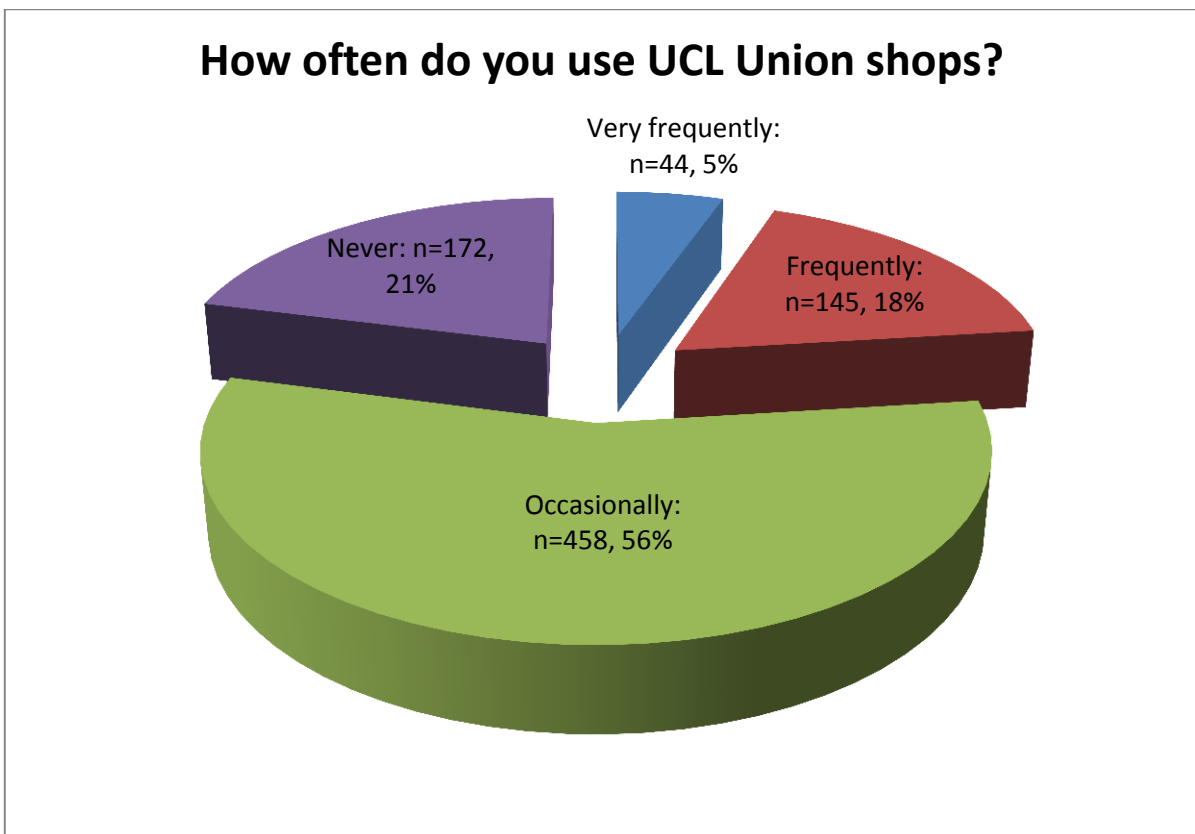
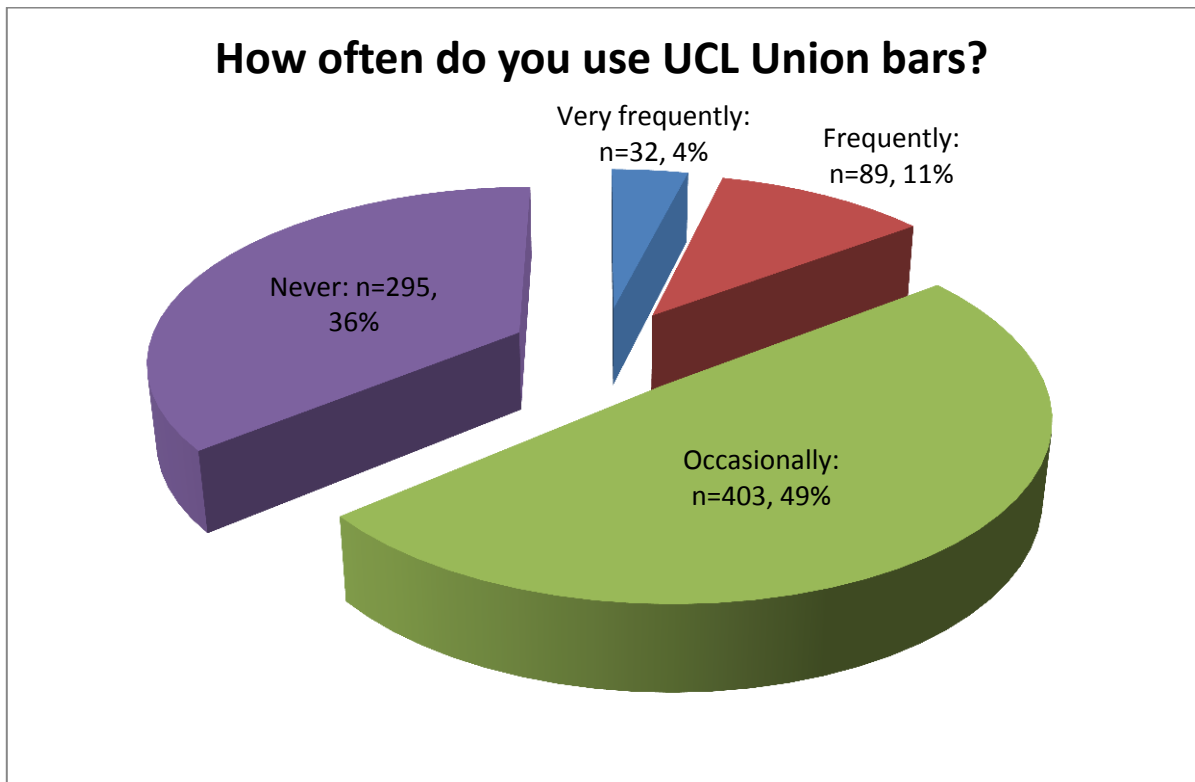
41% of respondents read the PGA fortnightly bulletin and almost half of respondents (47%) feel that they would prefer a monthly bulletin as their inbox is too full, although almost as many students (43%) like the current fortnightly frequency.



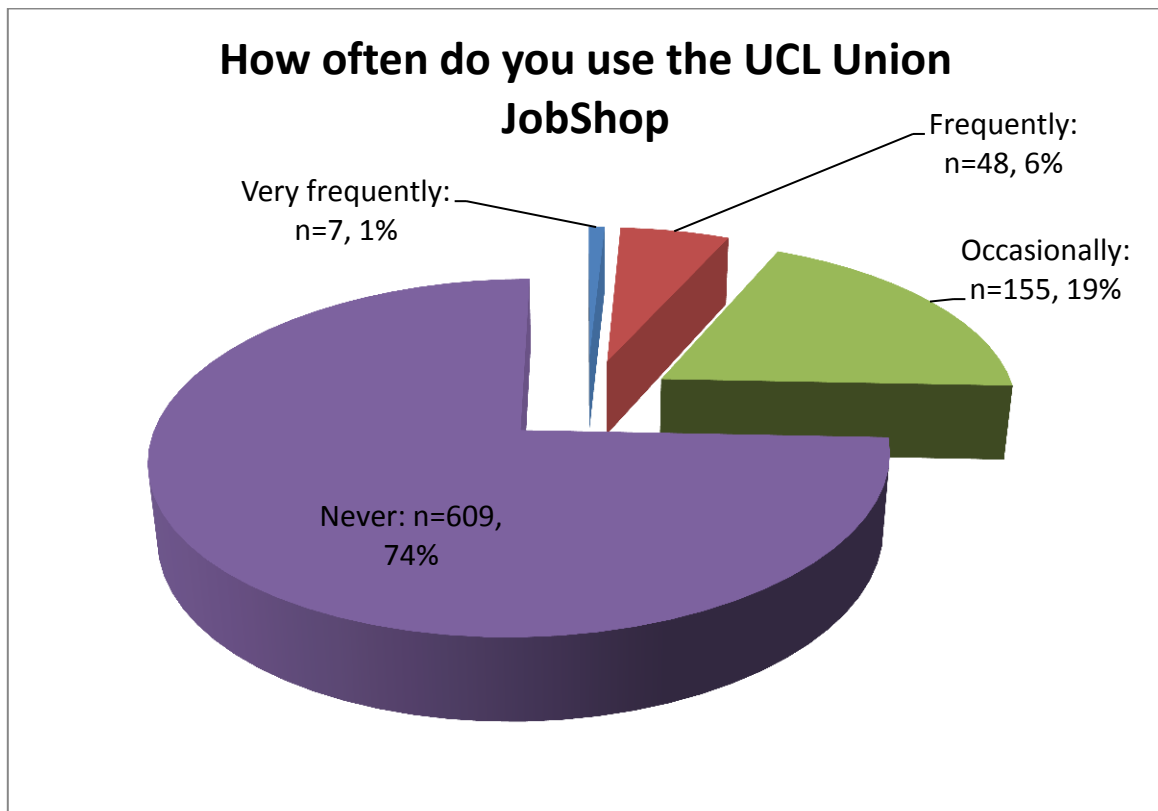
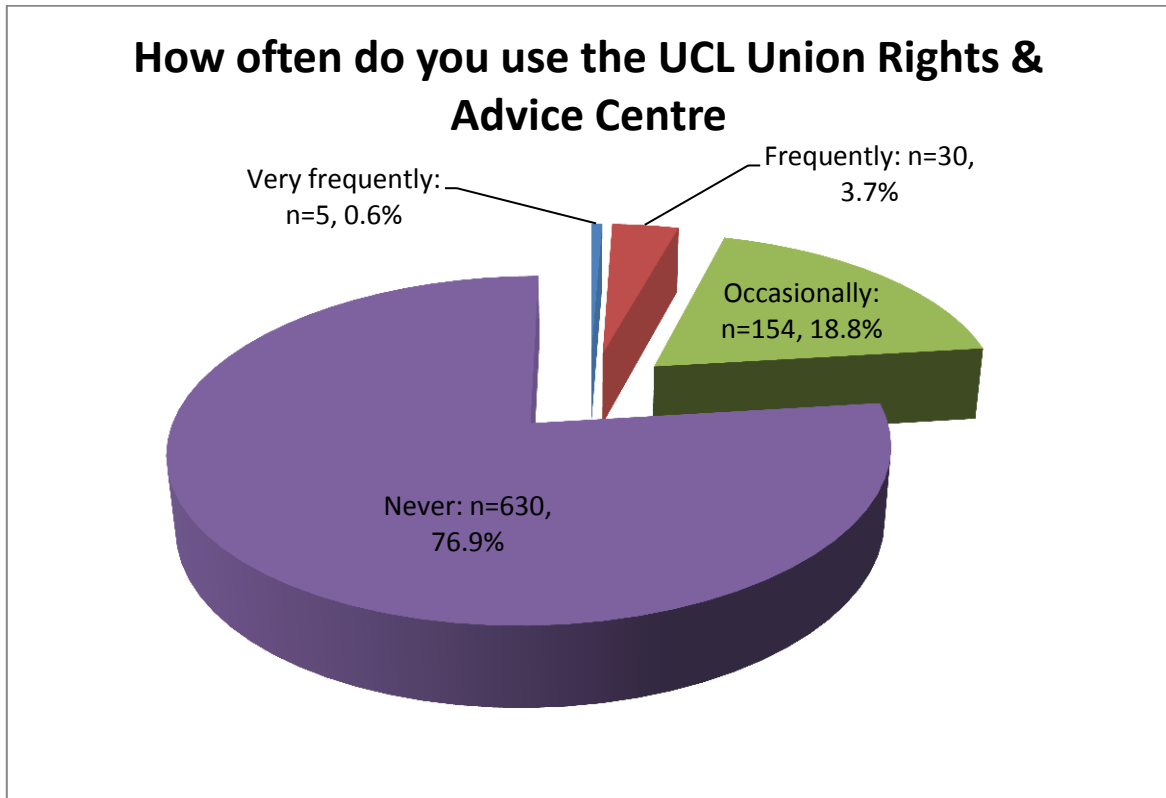
45% of respondents use UCL Union Cafés 'Very frequently' or 'Frequently', and a similar proportion of respondents (42%) use them 'Occasionally'. UCL Union Clubs/Societies are less utilised, with 63% of respondents never having used them.



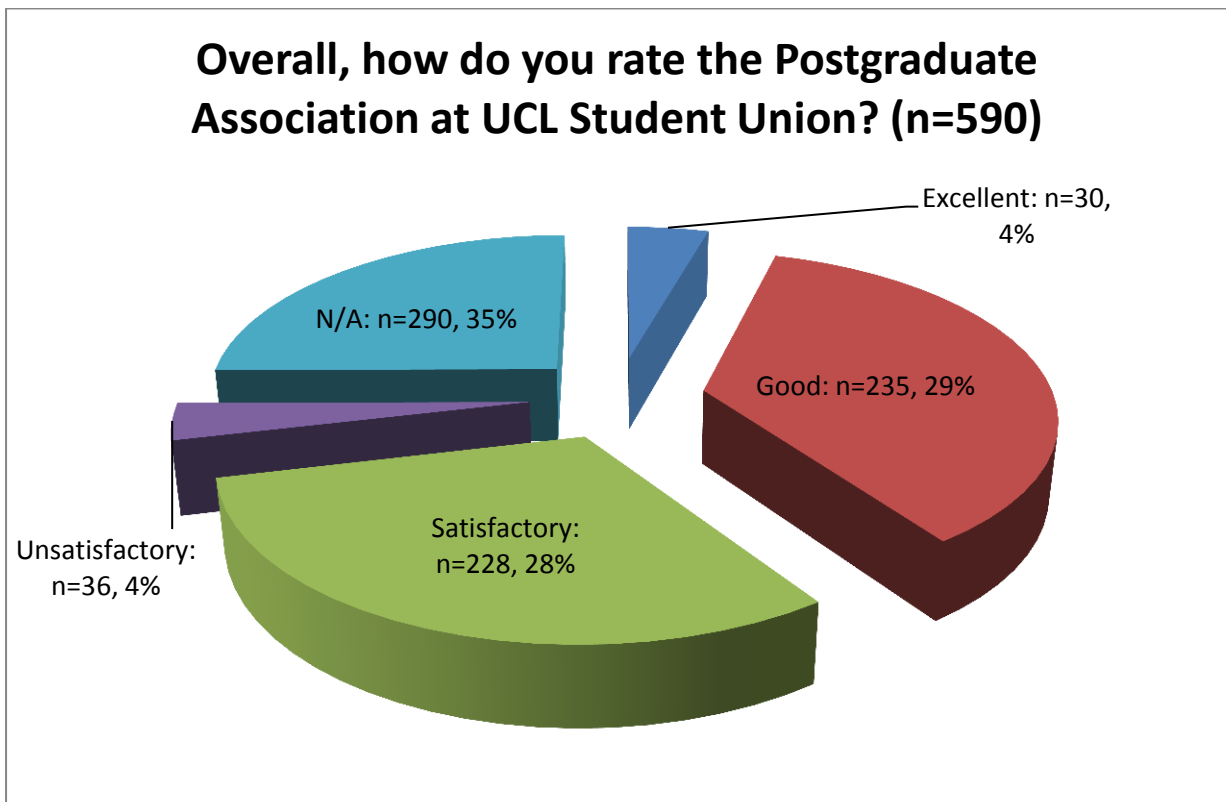
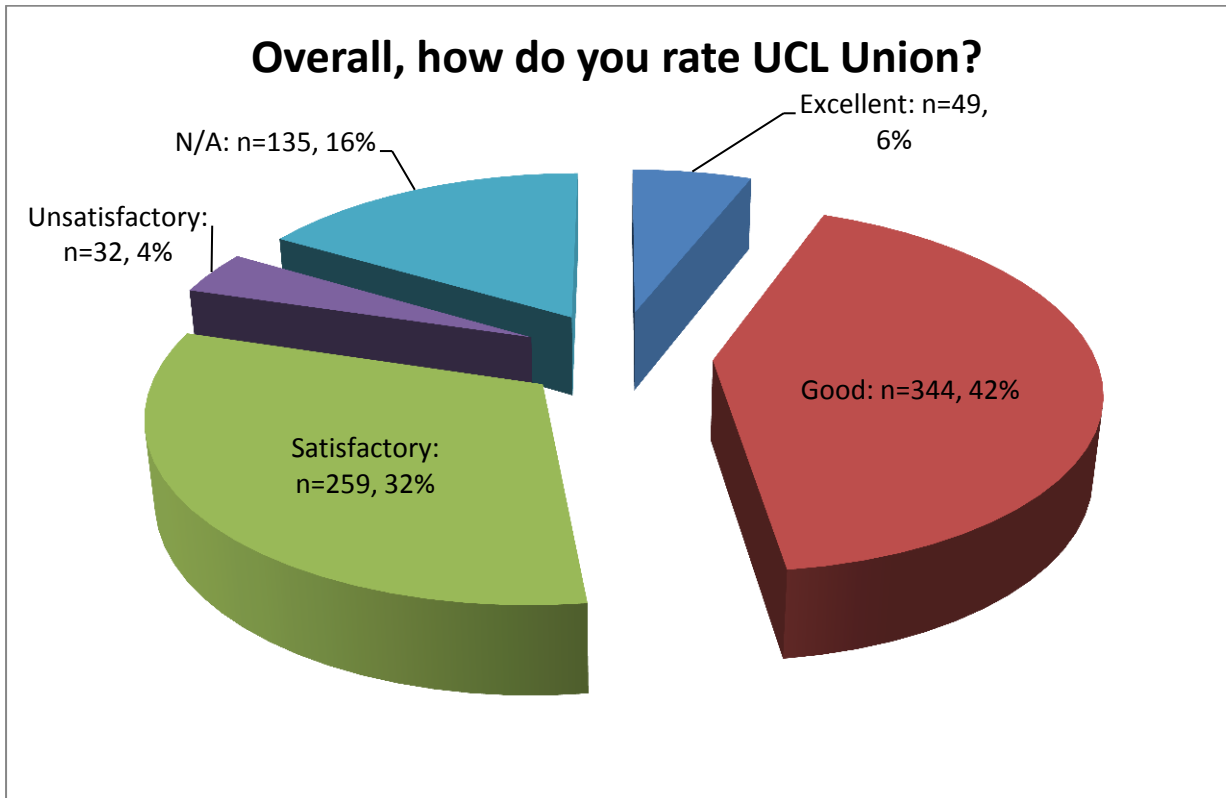
64% of respondents use UCL Union bars at least 'Occasionally', and similarly high number of students (79%) make use of UCL Union shops.



The majority of students (76.9%) do not use the UCL Union Rights & Advice Centre, and a similarly high proportion of students (74%) never make use of the UCL Union Jobshop.



The majority of respondents (80%) rated the student union at UCL as “Satisfactory” or better. Of those who were aware of the Postgraduate Association (PGA), 61% of respondents also rated it as 'Satisfactory' or better.

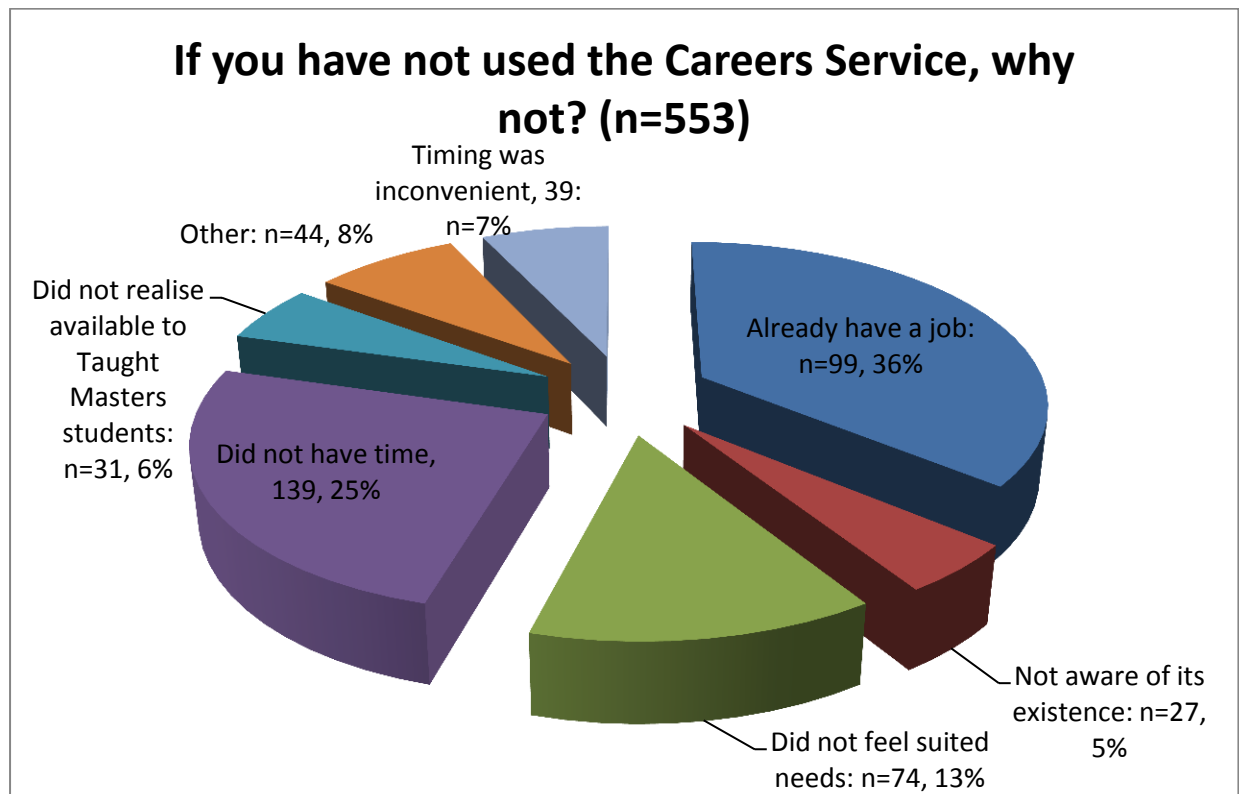
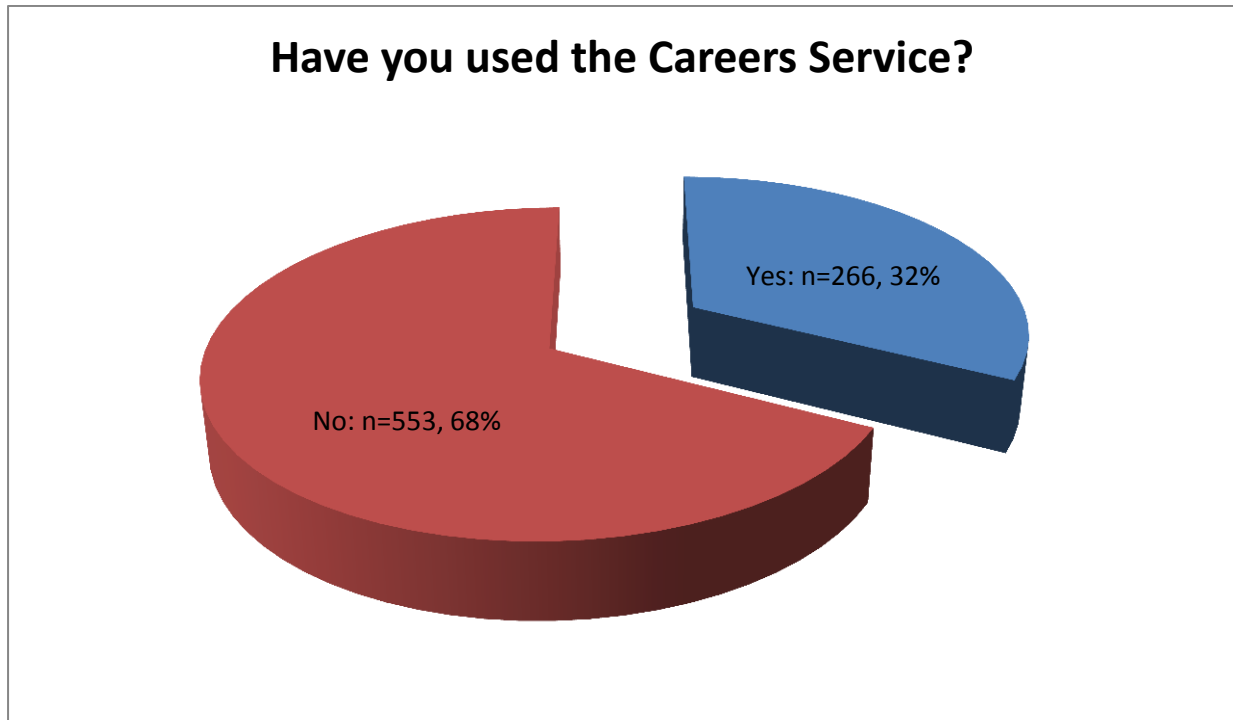




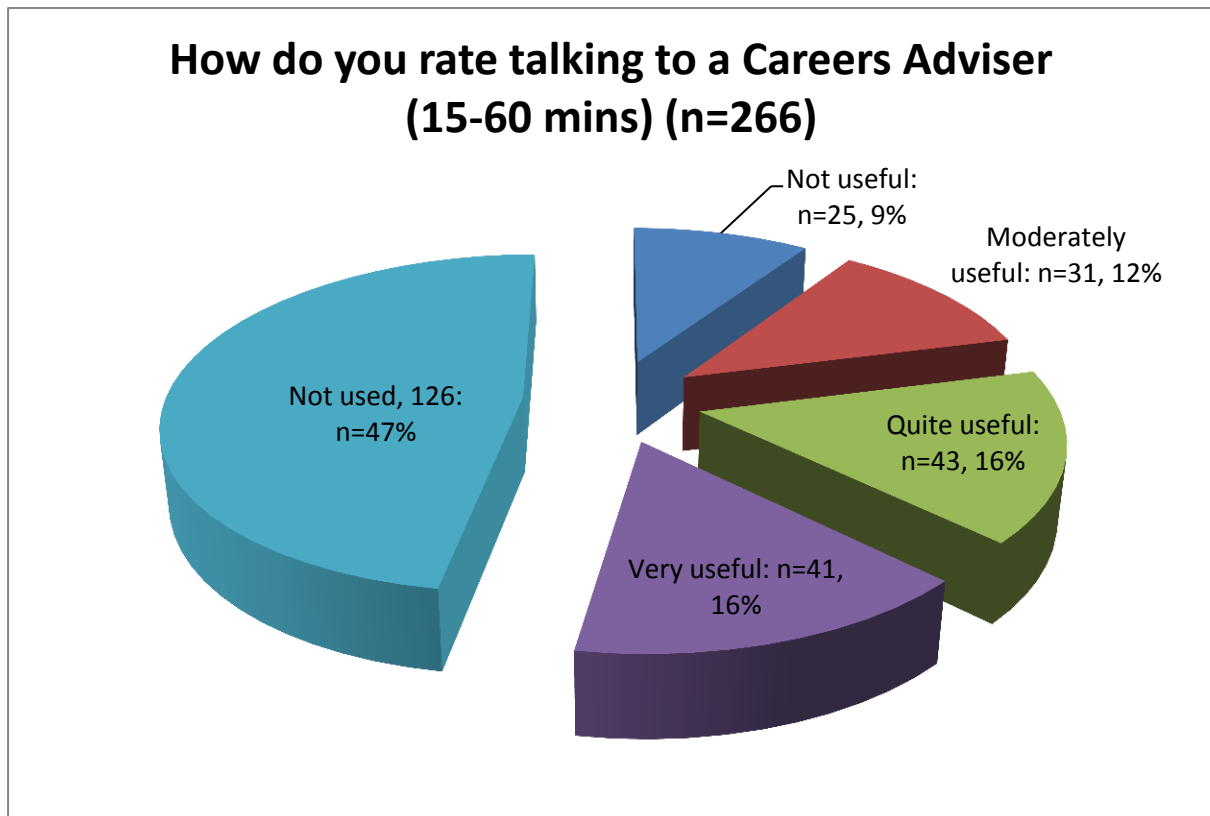
Among the additional comments was feedback that the opening times of student union bars, cafés and shops were quite limited and that societies and clubs that were of interest were limited. Some part time students felt that the student union did not represent them.

## M: Careers

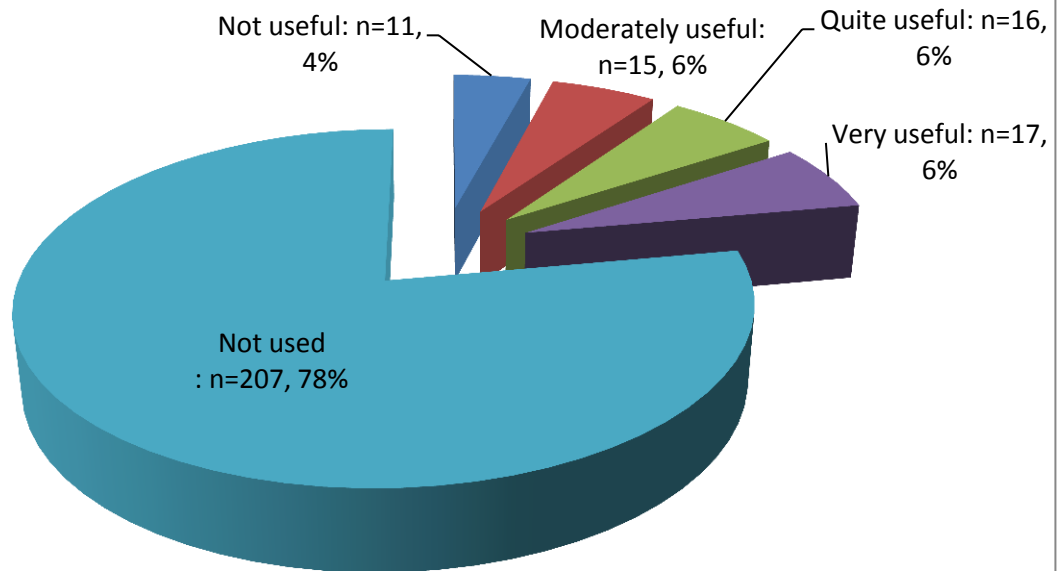
The majority of students who answered the survey had not used the Careers Service (68%). The main reason cited was because they already had a job (36%), and/or that they did not have time (25%).



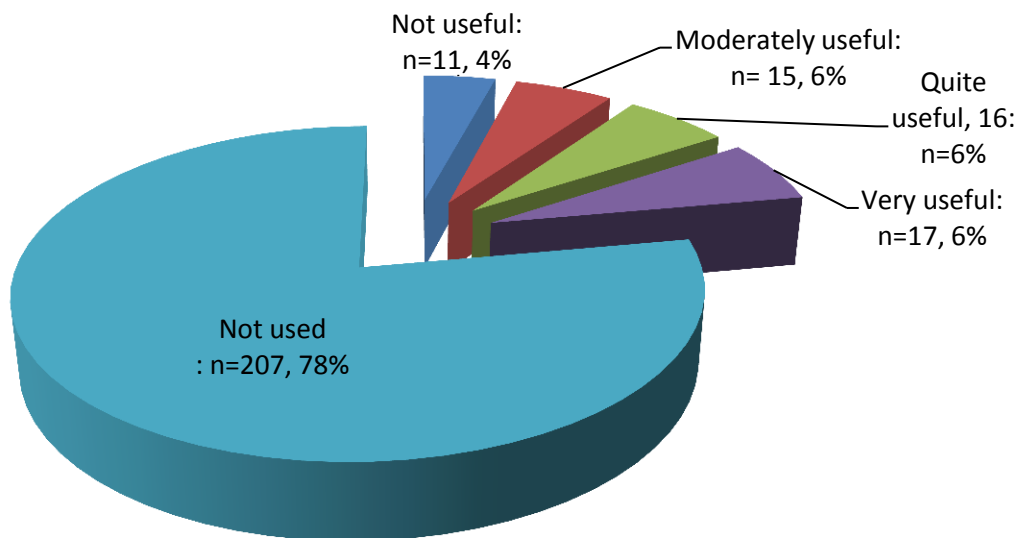
Of the students who did use the Careers service, talking to a Careers Advisor was the most commonly used service. Of the students using each service, the majority found them useful.



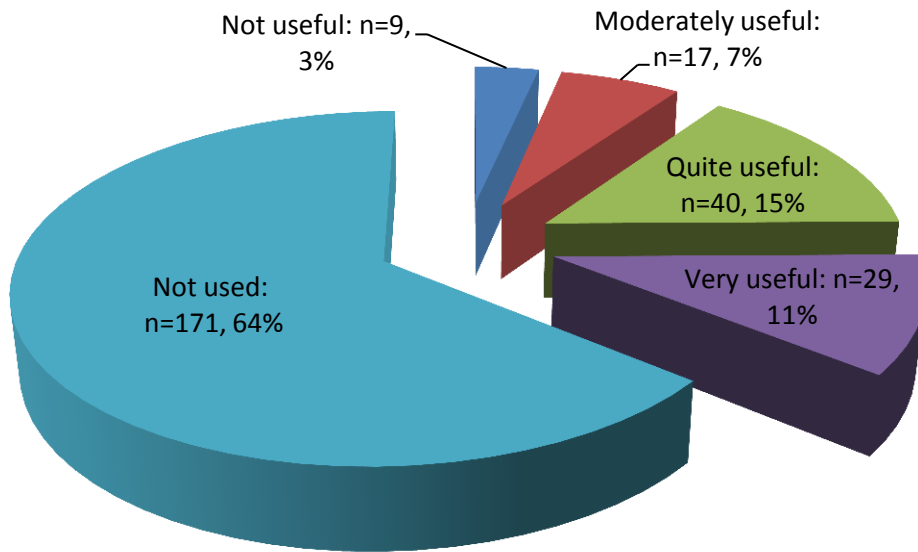
### How do you rate mock interviews with a Careers Advisor (n=266)



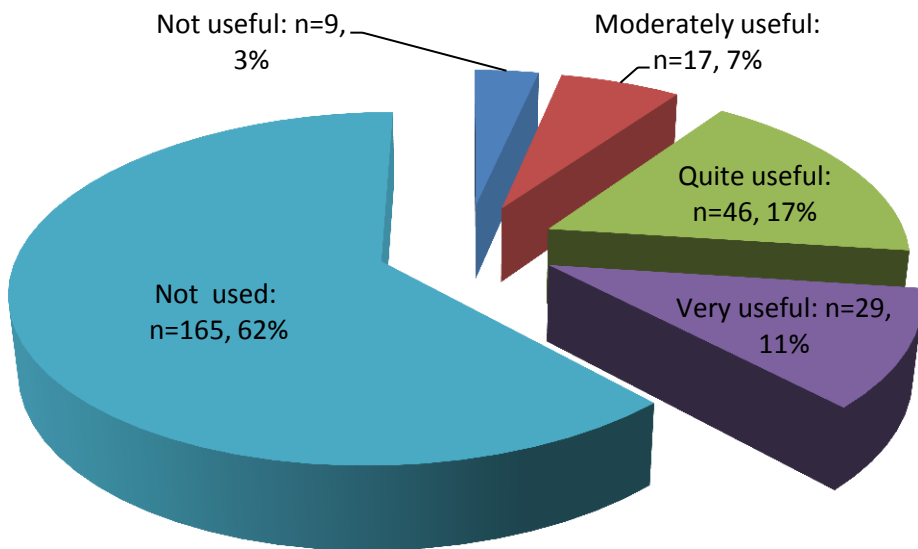
### How do you rate Career Advisor-led workshops or talks (including Master's QuickFix talks) (n=266)



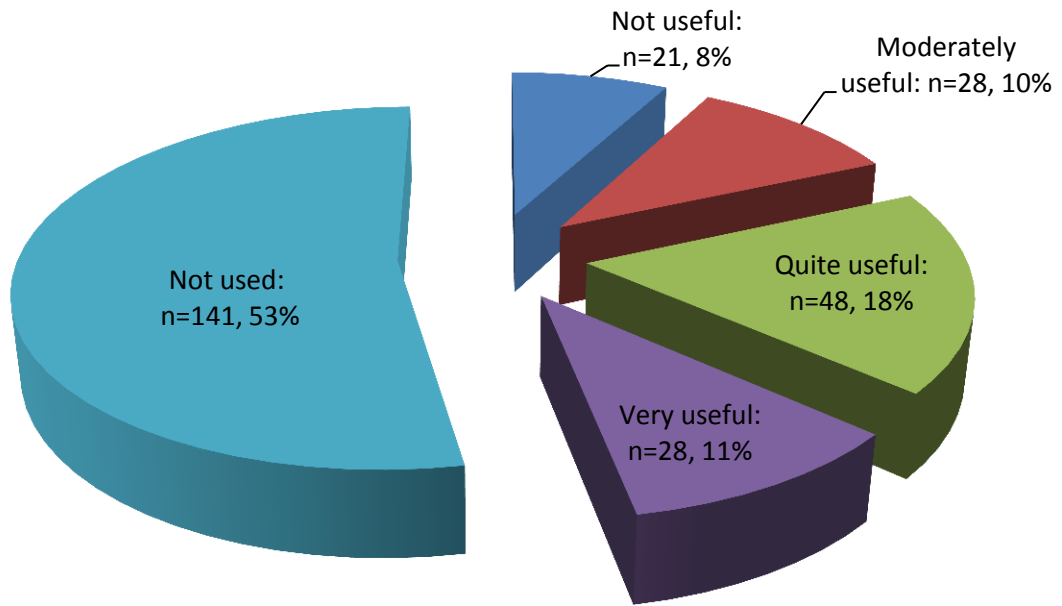
### How do you rate Employer-led workshops or talks (n=266)



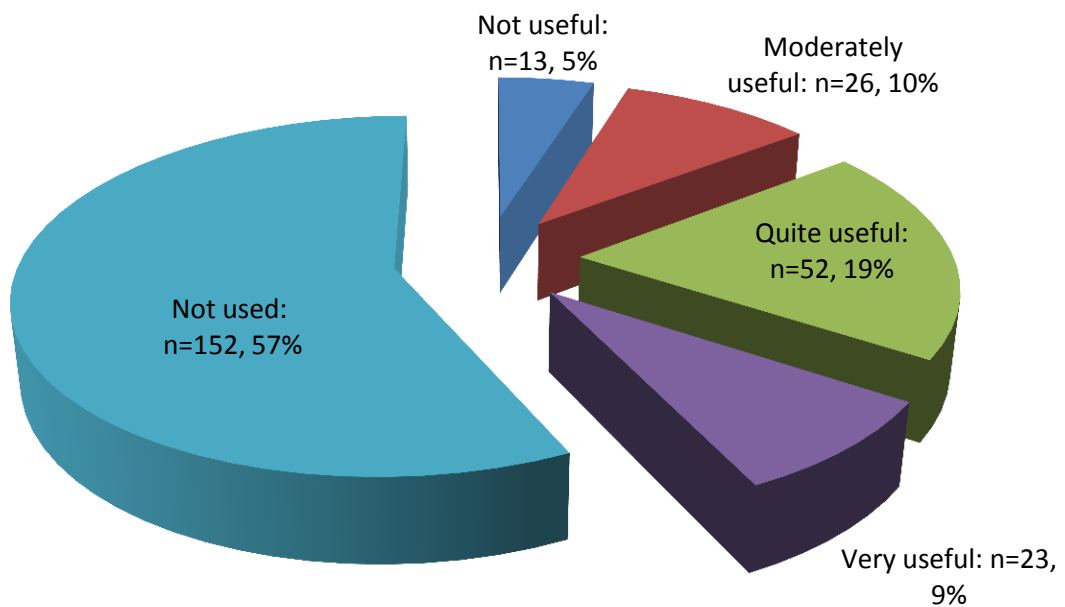
### How do you rate Employer presentations/fora (n=266)



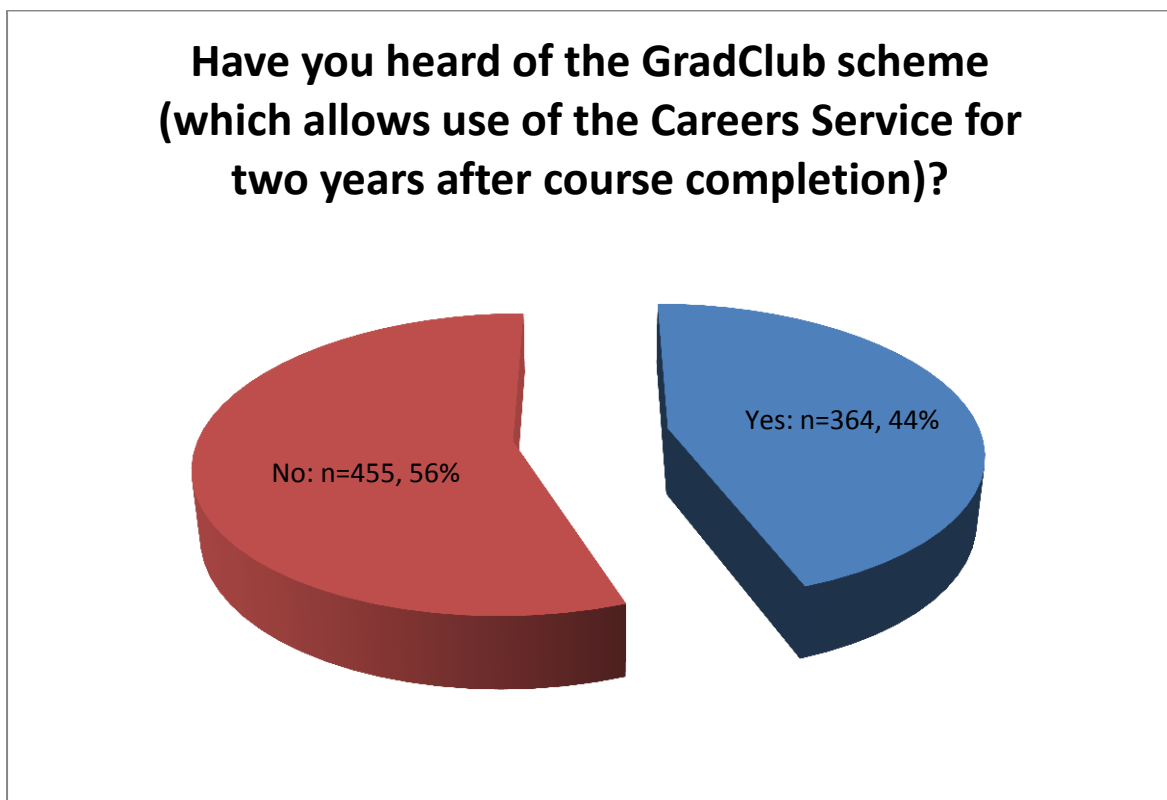
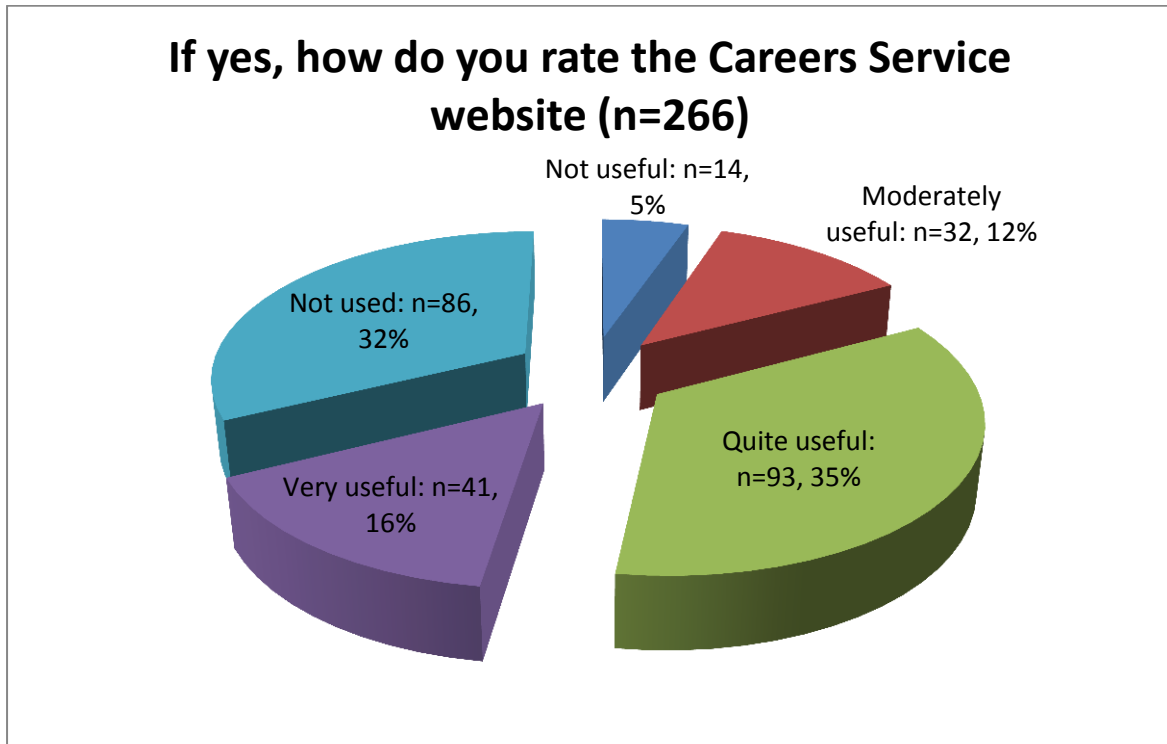
### How do you rate the Careers fairs (n=266)



### How do you rate the Careers information library (n=266)



68% of respondents had used the Careers Service website, the majority of whom found it useful. A slight majority of students (56%) had never heard of the GradClub scheme.



Student comments included that not enough was done by their department to provide information regarding the Careers Service. One student felt that the Careers Service would be more useful if more specific advice was provided with respect to different disciplines and for advice to be geared more towards graduate students.



## **Conclusion**

Overall, the data in this survey is positive. The admissions process, housing and student union were generally rated highly. The teaching, library and computing facilities also scored very positively, even if they did generate a lot of negative feedback in the additional comments. A possible reason is that these areas are of high importance to UCL students and are therefore likely to elicit stronger comments.

Although a large proportion of the additional comments were negative, only about a quarter of respondents left any comments. Furthermore, many of the comments were constructive in nature and mixed complaints with praise.